



FRED FEARNOT

WORK AND WIN

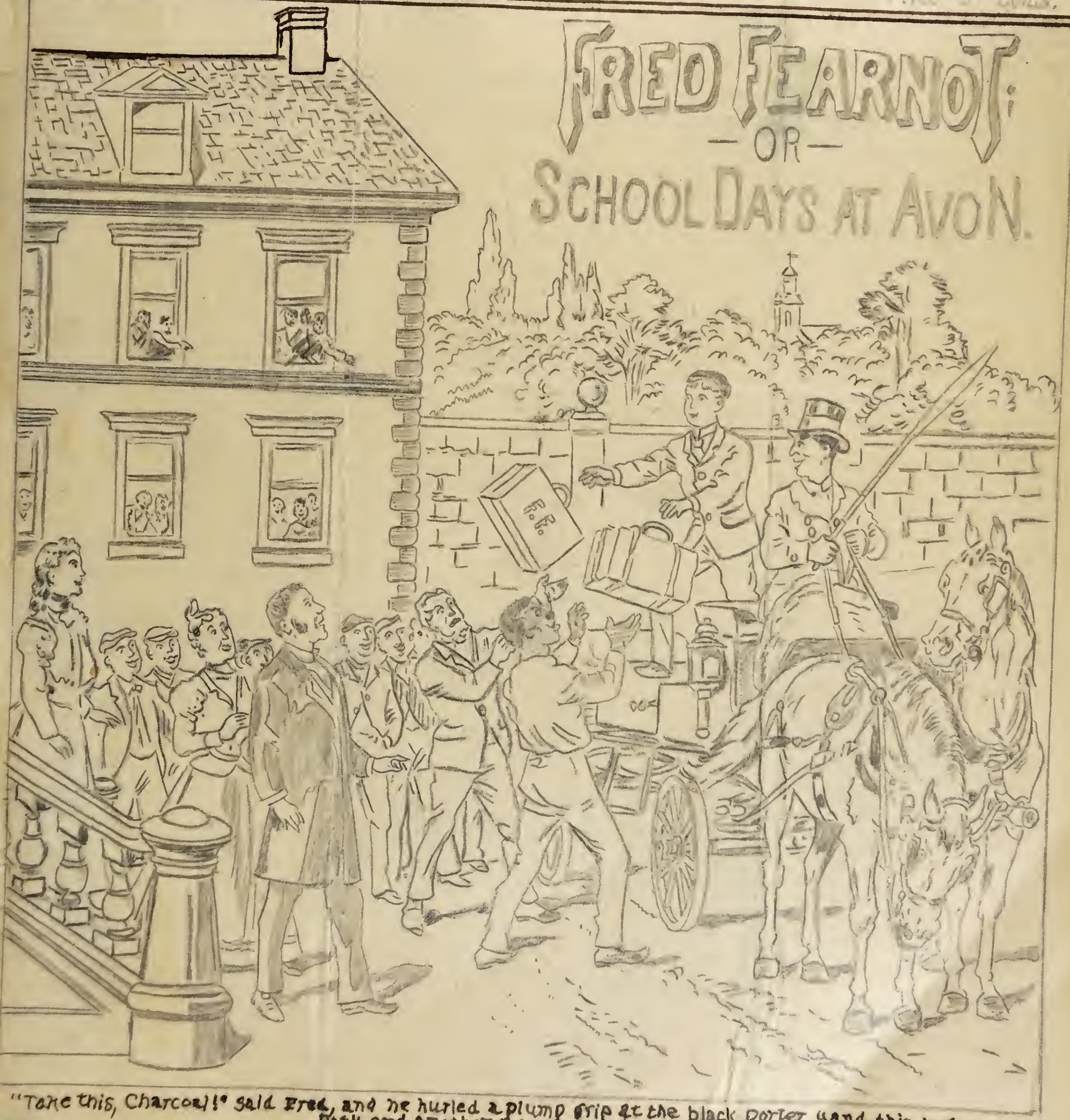
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FRED FEARNOT — OR — SCHOOL DAYS AT AVON.



"Take this, Charcoal!" said Fred, and he hurled a plump grip at the black porter, and this is for you, "Pab" and another grip struck the denier.

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800 W. Market
Orrville - - - Ohio

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CHAPTER I.

FRED FEARNOT MAKES HIS APPEARANCE AT THE AVON ACADEMY.

THE academy at Avon, not a thousand miles away from New York, had the reputation of being one of the best educational institutions in the country. It was also reputed one of the finest training schools outside of the military discipline of West Point. It was a private school owned and run by Professor Lambert, whose fame as a teacher had spread through a dozen States. He had built it with his own money, which an obliging brother had left him at his death, and was equipped equal to any college in the land.

The several buildings stood in the midst of an extensive grove, with a lawn that extended down to the river, with winding graveled walks and scores of seats all through it under the great trees.

There was the academy which stood by itself—a big white building devoted exclusively to the acquisition of knowledge. On the left of that was the dormitory with one hundred rooms for pupils in the two upper stories. Below was the great dining-room in the center, the gymnasium at the other, and below that the kitchen, store-room and rooms for use when needed. On the right of the academy stood a beautiful cottage, the private home of the professor's family, his wife and daughter.

Of course, there were servants galore, all well trained in their respective duties, and well paid for their services.

The professor's wife had been a teacher in her younger days, and now had charge of the great dormitory and presided at the table three times a day where one hundred and fifty boys breakfasted, dined and supped on the fare prepared for them daily. It required a great deal of executive ability to run that part of the business, and she had it. Of course, there was frequent trouble, but generally she was equal to the emergency.

The professor was a tall, slender old fellow, with ministerial looking side-boards. His hair all round

his head was tinged with gray, and always dressed as if to attend church or some other assembly. He was a learned man in every sense of the term, and a brainy one, too. The fortune that had been left him by his obliging brother would have kept him in luxuries all his life, but he was so fond of training the young mind in the ways of knowledge he could not give up the vocation of teacher—so he built the Avon Academy and made it a splendid success.

Miss Eunice Lambert, the daughter, was an amiable girl of twenty or more years, not particularly beautiful or very plain. Her smile was a winning one always. As for disposition she was so sweet tempered and forgiving that all the boys at the academy made her their attorney to plead for them with the professor, when by some violation of the rules, or some madcap prank they had incurred his displeasure. She rarely failed them, for she was the old man's idol.

Across the river from the academy stood the tower of Avon, from which the institution took its name.

A bridge spanned the stream, and anyone crossing it could be seen by students on the broad piazza of the academy building a quarter of a mile away.

One day a country wagon was seen coming across, and in it were two men, or rather a man and a youth. As the wagon was making direct for the gate of the inclosure a number of students gathered on the stoop and watched it with indifferent interest.

"Cabbages," remarked Tom Tipps.

"Turnips," added Joe Jencks.

"Potatoes," remarked Dick Duncan.

"Mutton," suggested another.

"Nixy—don't you see the kid?" said Terry Olcott.

"Sure!" chorused a half dozen as the wagon entered the gate.

Some one of the boys called the porter and janitor, and a big black, with a good-natured grin on his ebony face, and an Irishman appeared. They were the porter and janitor, Pete and Teddy.

Almost at the same moment the professor and his wife and daughter appeared on the stoop.

"Is this the Avon Academy?" the youth asked as the wagon stopped in front of the house.

"Yep!" chorused a dozen students.

"Then take this, Charcoal!" and he hurled a plump grip at the black porter—"and this is for you, Pat!" and another grip struck the janitor.

"Howly Mither av Moses!" gasped the Irishman, as he caught it before it reached the ground.

"Look a-heah, sah," exclaimed Pete, as he placed the grip he had caught down on the steps. "Is yer gwine ter frow dat trunk out dat way?"

"Yes—of course," and he reached back and caught hold of the trunk strap as if he were going to sling it over on the porter's head.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake hol' on dar," exclaimed Pete, running round to the rear end of the wagon, and reaching for the trunk. "Dis heah ain't no slaughter pen, sah!" and he gave the trunk a jerk that drew it to him.

"What's worrying you, Charcoal?" the youth asked. "Be careful now; that trunk's loaded. If it blows up you go below in small pieces."

Teddy turned round to set the grip he had caught down on the steps of the stoop, bending over a bit. The youth stepped out of the wagon by placing one foot on the janitor's back and landing lightly on the ground alongside the astonished professor.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" gasped Teddy, looking up like one who had suddenly run up against a banshee.

"Are you Professor Lambert?" the youth asked, removing his hat and making a bow that would have made a French dancing master sick with envy.

"Yes. I am Professor Lambert," was the answer as he looked the youth over.

"Then I am at the right place. I am Fred Fearnot, consigned to your care and tender mercy by my father, Judge Fearnot of New York. Here's a letter from him. He said he had already written to you."

"Yes, yes," said the professor, his rigid features relaxing as he took the letter presented by the youth. "So you are Fred, are you?"

"Yes, sir," and he looked around at the group. Mrs. Lambert had a very much astonished expression on her face, while Eunice was so amused her face was beaming with smiles. As for the score of students lolling around they were a puzzled lot. Some gazed at the new-comer in amazement, while others were trying to repress their risibles in the presence of the professor and his wife. But they all seemed to regard him as something new and a decided curiosity.

"Peter," called the professor to the black porter, "take Mr. Fearnot's baggage to room 34."

"Yes, sah," and Peter tried to raise the trunk to his shoulder. It was very heavy.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake!" he gasped, and looked at Teddy O'Hara the janitor.

Teddy assisted him in getting it on his shoulders, and he went ambling into the house with it and staggering up the stairs under the heavy load.

"We are glad to have you with us, young man," said the professor, "and hope your stay will be pleas-

ant to us and profitable to you. This is my wife—Mrs. Lambert—and my daughter Eunice, who will look after your comfort while you are here away from your home."

Fred again gave that bow of profound respect with such grace and politeness as to cause the rigid features of Mrs. Lambert to relax somewhat. Eunice was charmed. No student had ever before appeared there with such a Chesterfieldian bow. She glanced at the other students, and smiled at the expressions she saw on their faces.

Pete came down after the two grips, perspiration pouring down his ebony face.

"If you will follow the porter," said the professor to Fred, "he will show you to your room. When you are settled comfortably, Mr. Tracy, one of my assistant teachers, will call and give you information about the rules under which we all live here."

"Thank you, sir," and Fred again bowed and proceeded to follow the black porter up a flight of stairs and along a wide corridor to room 34, which he entered close behind him.

CHAPTER II.

THE PUZZLED PORTER.

"DAT am de hefties' trunk I ever toted, sah," remarked Pete, as he deposited the two grips in a corner of the room.

"Yes," assented Fred. "I told you it was loaded, you know. I keep loaded all the time myself."

"What's youse loaded wif, sah?" Pete asked, looking inquiringly at him.

"Oh, many things, Charcoal. This is some of the stuff," and he drew a silver dollar from his pocket and handed it to him. "Load yourself with it and see how comfortable it will make you feel."

Pete grabbed it and stowed it away in a capacious pocket, making a grand stand display of his ivories at the same time. It won his heart and confidence.

"Now, Charcoal, just take the straps off my trunk before you go down, as I must change my clothes before that teacher comes in."

"My name ain't Charcoal, sah—it's Peter—dey calls me Pete."

"Oh, that's all right, old man. The first black man was called Charcoal, and in some parts of the world they have no other name. The first white man was called chalk, and——"

"Dey called 'im Adam, sah," corrected the porter, who prided himself on knowing a few things.

"Oh, that's the English way of pronouncing it. In Greek Adam means chalk. You don't know Greek, do you?"

"No, sah, I don't," and he looked at the youth with a very puzzled expression on his face.

"Well, you understand why I called you Charcoal. It was the first name of your race."

"How 'bout dem yaller niggers, sah—what dey call 'em den?"

"There were no yellow folks at the creation. They came afterwards when the whites and blacks got

mixed. That's where the Chinese came from. They are all yellow, you know."

"Yes, sah—dey is, an' dey ain't no good, nuder."

"No, not much. They all have pig tails, you know. When the first black man was made he raised a row about his color—said he wanted to be white and have straight hair. The white man told him to shut up and go to work. But he sassed the white man till he got mad and brought on a fight. He was kicked into the river, and to keep him from drowning the Lord caused the waters to flow over to the other side. He landed on his hands and feet in the mud, which rubbed off about half the black. The mark is there yet. Look at your hands."

Pete opened his hands and saw a dull brown-reddish color in the palms, while the backs of them were jet black. His eyes bulged and Fred remarked:

"You see for yourself, don't you?"

"Look a-heah, sah! What youse come heah foah? Youse cain't lirn nuffin' heah. You knows too much now—an' dat's er fac'!"

"Oh, my father wanted to get me stuffed away somewhere to prevent me learning any more, so he sent me here. Being only a boy I had to come, you see. Raise that window there; it's too close in here."

"Yes, sah," and he went to the window and opened it. At the same time Fred opened his trunk.

Instantly there was the sound of a hen flying off her nest, with flapping wings and tremendous cackling. Fred slammed down the lid of his trunk and gasped out:

"Catch her!"

Pete dashed out into the corridor, which seemed filled with the cackle of the hen, exclaiming:

"De Lawd sabe us!"

He stood in blank amazement in the corridor, looking for the hen whose loud cackling filled the whole building.

Students popped out of their rooms, and Pete exclaimed:

"Goshamighty—whar dat hen?"

"Yes; where is it?" chorused a dozen boys.

Just then the hen was heard to fly through a window way out into the yard, keeping up her cackle till the sound died away in the distance.

"Did you let her get away?" Fred asked of Pete.

"Fo' de Lawd, sah, I nebber seed no hen, an' dat's er fac'," said the puzzled porter.

"Here—come in here," called Fred, and Pete re-entered the room, asking:

"Whar dat hen come frum, sah?"

"I had her in my trunk," said Fred. "I wouldn't take fifty dollars for her, and if you find her and bring her in I'll give you five dollars. She is blue and green and has an owl's head, with spurs two inches long. Can whip anything that has feathers. But don't say a word about it to any of the boys. Here's a half dollar for you," and he handed him another silver coin.

"Goshamighty!" gasped Pete. "Blue an' green wif a owl's haid! What sorter chicken am dat?"

"Hush-sh—I'll tell you about it some time."

Pete was a picture to look at as he stood there.

"Put that grip in the closet there," ordered Fred, and as the porter took it up there came a fierce growl of an angry bull-dog from it.

"De Lord sabe us!" and he dropped it and ran out into the corridor, his eyes bulging till they seemed on the point of hanging out on his ebony cheeks.

"What's the matter with you?" growled Fred, kicking the grip. "Keep quiet, will you?" and he put it in the closet himself.

"Where's that chicken, Pete?" called a student from the other end of the hall. "Why don't you bring 'em in roasted instead of alive?"

"I didn't fetch in no chicken, sah," replied Pete.

"What was it then—a turkey?"

Here Fred shut the door and left the puzzled porter out in the hall. He heard the boys firing questions at him as he beat a retreat—and chuckled quietly to himself as he proceeded to change his travel-stained clothes for another suit.

"I guess I'll have some fun with that coon if I stay here," he muttered. "He'll be looking for that hen for weeks, and keeping shy of my grip with the bull-dog in it. There's lots of fun in ventriloquism if I can keep it from the boys."

In a little while he had changed his clothes and sat down by the window to wait for the assistant teacher who, the professor said, was to call upon him.

In the meantime those boys who saw his arrival were discussing his free and easy way of introducing himself, and laughing at the surprise he gave the professor and his wife.

"I guess he's a chip," remarked Tom Tipps.

"I'm betting that he's a hummer," said Joe Jencks.

"But Teddy thinks he's a regular bird to be shot," laughed Dick Duncan. "Did you see him walk off the wagon onto his back?"

"Yes, and did you ever see a worse paralyzed Irishman in your life? It'll take him a week to get over it."

"And Pete! Did you see him when he asked him if he was going to hand out his trunk as he did his grips?"

"Didn't I? and did you notice the old man? Oh, but all the wrath of Achilly beamed in his face for a moment or two; but that bow! It brought the smile back again and all was serene. Say, fellows! How about hazing him?"

"It's got to be done," said a half dozen at once. "Teddy would give a month's wages to see it."

"Yes," said Tipps, "we can't let up on him. I guess he knows enough to take it straight."

"If he doesn't I guess we can persuade him to," chuckled Terry Olcott. "The majority rules here—outside the school-room."

"Of course," assented Tipps. "But we'll have to wait awhile to size him up. Here comes Pete! Say,

Pete, how about that charcoal? Are you going to stand that?"

Pete shook his head and said:

"Dat boy is jes' a funnin'. He knows more'n der whole crowd ob youse."

"Holy smoke! Captured the coon in ten minutes!" exclaimed Joe Jencks.

But Pete didn't stop to bandy words with them.

He knew them of old, and didn't have any time to waste on them. Just then he had other business to attend to. There was a reward of five dollars offered for the return of a "blue and green hen with an owl's face and spurs two inches long," and he wanted very much to earn it.

Round the house he went looking in every direction, and over about the stables and barn yard. The strange hen was not there, and so, after a little time spent in the search, he returned to his regular duties. At times a very broad grin appeared on his face, and he might have been heard muttering:

"Chicken in de trunk an' bull-dog in de grip! I dunno wot kinder boy he is! Reckon he's er gwine ter make mischief some day! Lawd! He done knows already mo' dan all ob 'em! Who knowed er nigger fell in de mud?" and he looked at the palms of his big hands, where Fred's story was confirmed by proof as strong as Holy writ to his unsophisticated mind.

The janitor was down in his office in the basement nursing his wrath over having been stepped on by the new-comer.

"Oh, lave me get at the gossoon," he was saying to himself every few minutes. "Sure, an' it's a sassanach he is—bad cess ter 'im! I'll bate the hide av 'im till it rings for the grave digger!" and he clenched his teeth and fist as he spoke. He was mad all through over the insult in the presence of the professor's wife and daughter.

Fred was sitting by the window of his room cogitating over the change from New York to the classic shades of Avon when a knock on the door aroused him.

"Come in!" he answered.

The door opened and a dignified, little spectacled man stood there.

Fred sprang to his feet.

"Pardon me, sir!" he said, bowing low, "I should have opened the door myself, but I really thought it was the porter. Come in and have a seat. You are one of the professors, I believe?"

"I am one of the assistant teachers," replied the little man, as he entered the room.

"Glad to see you, sir. Take a seat. Hope all the other assistants are about your size. I am afraid of big, giant teachers who can lay me over their knees and make local application of rules of discipline, to say nothing of scientific demonstrations."

The little man looked at him over his glasses with an expression of astonishment in his little gray eyes.

"I hope you are not one whom it is necessary to discipline that way," he remarked.

"Well, I hope so, too; but once upon a time I was a good deal younger than I am now, and my experience as a juvenile at school occupies a front room in my memory, hence the injudicious remark I made. I still think my first teacher could have licked Goliath with one hand in his pocket."

CHAPTER III.

FRED MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE ASSISTANT.

MR. TRACY, for that was the name of the teacher, chuckled as he listened to the breezy talk of Fred, and took a fancy to him at once.

"I wish to give you this card on which are printed the rules of the academy," he said, handing the card to Fred as he spoke. "The students do not find it very difficult to comply with them, and I hope you may see your way clear to conform to them. I also wish to ascertain how far you have advanced in your studies so as to enable me to place you where you can begin just where you left off," and then he began questioning him about what books he had studied.

Fred was one of the brightest boys he had ever met, but he did not tell him so. He was pleased and remarked:

"You are far enough advanced to enter the senior class, I think."

"That is where I wish to land," said Fred, "although I am ready to study wherever placed. I have a good memory and generally retain what I learn."

"Ah! That is one of the best faculties one can have," said Mr. Tracy. "Of course we pay some attention to physical culture as well as the mental. Have you ever belonged to a gymnasium?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well," and he made a note of every answer given. "I'll send one of the under teachers to you, who will introduce you to some of the students," and Mr. Tracy bowed himself out of the room.

"Well, I'd like to get out of here and see some of the boys," Fred said to himself, as he turned about the room. "I wonder what the rules say about that?" and he looked at the card Mr. Tracy had given him.

He was reading them when a knock on the door was heard.

"Come in!"

The door opened, and another teacher, with spectacles, entered the room, looking as solemn as an owl.

"Mr. Tracy requested me to introduce you to some of the students," said the new-comer. "When you are ready to go down I shall be pleased to accompany you."

"If it makes no difference to you, sir, I'd rather dispense with that ceremony," returned Fred, very much to the new-comer's surprise as well as pleasure.

"I assure you it does make a difference to me—for it is a duty I detest. I am glad you detest it, too," and he extended his hand to Fred.

"Good!" laughed Fred, as he grasped and shook

his hand. "I don't like so much formality. Just turn me loose among the boys and I'll get in with them without any trouble at all. What is your name?"

"My name is Brown. The boys call me 'Brownie' behind my back, but they are all my friends. I frequently get them out of trouble at the risk of trouble for myself. I was a boy once myself."

"Well, you're the first teacher I ever saw who ever seemed to think he had been one," and Fred laughed. "I hope, if I live to be gray haired or bald headed, I will always remember my boyhood days."

"You are right, my boy. I was much happier as a boy than I have ever been as a man. But some boys take delight in trying to make a man's hair turn gray in a single night. I hope you are not one of that kind."

"I hope so, too, sir. But there are men who take delight in making boys wish they had never been born. Should such be allowed to grow old gradually?"

Brown chuckled at the way Fred put it, and said:

"When in training for the great battle of life, a boy must put up with many things that are distasteful to him. The discipline of camp life is irksome, but it's the way all great soldiers are made."

"I guess you are right," laughed Fred, "but I hope no boys are tied up and flayed in this institution?"

"Oh, no. The boys down-stairs will tell you how things are here. Come, let's go down," and he turned and left the room, followed by Fred.

Quite a number of the boys were still lolling about the stoop, talking quietly among themselves and evidently waiting for Fred's appearance. When he and Brown appeared they rose to their feet and looked as solemn as owls.

"What ails you fellows?" Fred asked, looking at them. "What are you afraid of? Brownie won't hurt any of you. He's all right."

That broke them all up.

Brown was staggered at being called Brownie to his face.

The boys burst into a roar and rushed forward to shake hands with him, whilst Brown wheeled and retreated into the house again.

The first one to grasp Fred's hand was Dick Duncan, who said:

"Glad to see you. My name is Dick Duncan. What's yours?"

"Glad to know you, Dunc, old man. My name is Fearnot—Fred Fearnot, and I guess I'm as bad as the best of you."

The boys laughed and at once voted him a chip. He soon had the name of each one, and never forgot it. But he would play on it now and then, to the great amusement of the others.

"You want to keep an eye open for the janitor," said Joe Jencks.

"What's ailing him?"

"You stepped on his back from the wagon to the

porch. He's a son of Erin, and has vowed to blow you up with dynamite to wipe out the insult."

"Well, I'll be hanged! I thought he bent over to offer me his back, and have been thinking ever since how polite he was!"

"Polite! He is the maddest man alive," said Terry Olcott—"a regular wild Irishman from Tipperary. You want to look out for him."

"Oh, that's all right. We'll be the best of friends. Say, how do you fellows like it here?"

"Oh, so so," they replied. "But we'd skip if we could. We've all tried it, but we are always caught, brought back, locked up and fed on bread and water till we give up and cry enough."

"What a lot of chumps you must be to do that," he remarked.

"How could we help ourselves?" Tom Tipps asked.

"I don't know, but when you hear me cry out enough, bury me, please, for I'll be deader than limburger."

"Oh, wait—just wait. Don't do any bragging till after the old man has run you through the mill. He grinds slow but very fine—yes, very fine."

"What sort of a mill does he use?"

"Oh, you've got to find out just as we did. We've been through it, and, of course, want to see how you'll come out," laughed Dick Duncan; "eh, boys?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, you're a sorry lot. I'd like to have seen you before you passed through the hopper. If I knew of a danger I'd give warning like a man and not sneak around to see another tumble into it."

"Don't preach to us—we won't have it—see!" said Dick Duncan, making a brusque bluff.

"Now, Dunkey, old man, don't go to braying too soon. I am no preacher, nor the son of one. I am no tenderfoot, either."

"See here, now," said Dick, "you're too fresh altogether. My name is Dick Duncan; don't forget that and call me by any other name. I won't have it."

"Oh, that's all right, old man," said Fred, laughing. "I like to see a fellow stuck on himself. It shows he has a good opinion of himself. Shake," and he extended his hand to Dick who took it, saying:

"I am not stuck on myself at all, but I don't want anything stuck on to me that don't belong to me."

"Good again. We are alike in our dislikes, I see."

"Here comes Teddy, boys!" whispered Joe Jencks, as the janitor came up from his quarters and approached them. The boys turned and looked at O'Hara as if expecting trouble.

Fred eyed him, too, and saw that a streak of blood was in his eye. He went forward to meet him, extended his hand in a manly way, saying:

"See here, janitor, the boys say I insulted you when I stepped on you in getting out of the wagon. I owe you an apology. I didn't mean to insult you,

for I know too well that an Irishman won't stand it."

"Sure, an' he won't!" said Teddy, grasping his hand and shaking it heartily. "Whin a gintleman spakes up and apologizes like a man, Ted O'Hara is the man that says it's all right, bedad!" and he wrung Fred's hand again.

"I am fond of a little joke," said Fred, "but I never mean to wound one's feelings. I am too much of a gentleman for that."

"Do yez hear that, ye gossoons?" exclaimed Teddy, looking round at the other boys. "It's a gintleman he is—ivery inch av him, begob! Sure, an' we're not overrun wid the likes av him!"

"Bah!" they all growled.

"What's the matter with you, Teddy?" one of them asked. "Been drinking again? The old man said he'd fire you if he caught you drunk again."

Just at that moment Mr. Tracy came out on the porch and stood there gazing at the boys. His presence had the effect of producing a profound silence among the group. He was a small man, but exercised an authority that the boys respected to a marked degree.

Fred went up the steps and stood by his side, saying:

"Mr. Tracy, this is the most beautiful site for a great educational institution I ever saw or read of. I am really in love with it."

"Glad to hear you say so," returned the teacher. "I quite agree with you as to the location."

Fred was going to say more when the professor's wife came out, looking very severely at him through her gold glasses. He removed his hat and made a profound bow, which she returned.

"Our new pupil was just expressing his admiration of the academy site," said Tracy, addressing her.

It was her one weak point.

She smiled and said:

"I am glad to see you appreciate the natural beauties of the place."

"It is grand. I wish I could get a photographic picture of it to send to my father. He is a great admirer of the professor, and the picture would please him very much."

"You shall have one," she said, in very pleasant tones.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW FRED ESCAPED A HAZING.

"Boys," whispered Joe Jencks to the others, "he's a genius with the gall of Old Nick. He has captured the old gal herself."

"And the nigger, the Irishman and old Trigonometry," added Tom Tipps, as he gazed at the newcomer standing there, hat in hand, talking to the wife of the professor.

Mrs. Lambert was severe with all the boys, and very aristocratic in her bearing. But now she was talking and smiling as though he were the son of the President of the United States instead of a pupil just

arrived, whom she had never seen before that morning.

The boys didn't know what to make of it.

They were puzzled, and walked away in a group toward the entrance gate of the inclosure, where they stopped to consult.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Terry Olcott. "The old man is chinning him now. I'll bet my best suit he'll win him as easy as he did Teddy."

"We've got to give him a double dose of hazing, boys. He's too fresh," and Tom Tipps looked back as he spoke and saw the pompous professor laughing heartily at something Fred had said.

"Yes," assented Dick Duncan. "He is playing to a full house now, and will get the best of everything."

"Yes, and that, too, before he has opened a book," said another.

They stood there fully a quarter of an hour looking on and quietly debating among themselves. Then the dinner bell rang, and they all moved off toward the great dining-hall.

Mrs. Lambert led the way with her husband, and Fred, accompanied by Mr. Tracy, followed behind them. He was shown a seat quite near the head of the table—close enough to converse with the professor, his wife, daughter and Mr. Tracy. Brown sat at the farther end of the table, and other teachers were scattered along on either side like sentinels, to keep the boys in order.

The boys were waited on by men waiters, and such was the discipline and systematic order prevailing that everyone was served promptly and to his full allowance.

It was the rule that no conversation should be indulged in at the table, so there was very little talking during the meal. The professor and his wife, though, spoke a few words to Fred, and he replied. The boys noticed it and felt aggrieved—some of them did.

It was Saturday, hence no lessons that day, and the students were at liberty to amuse themselves as they pleased.

Fred went up to his room immediately after dinner, and a few minutes later the porter appeared there with a pitcher of water for him.

"Good for you, Charcoal," he said. "I was just wishing for that."

"Better stay heah in yer room!" said Pete, in a half whisper.

"What for? Have you found my chicken?"

"No, sah! Dat chicken done flewed clar away. Dem boys is er gwine ter shake youse up."

"Shake me up! How?"

"Why, dey allus play rough wif de new-comers, sah. Dey call it interdoosin' 'im. Mister Brown calls it hazin', sah."

"Oh, yes, I understand! I've been to school before, old man, and like the fun. I expect them to do that."

"Goshamighty!" grinned Pete. "Youse hain't done been heah afore. Dem boys is bad uns, sah."

"Just a bit lively, I guess," said Fred. "I am one of them and don't mind a little frolic with them."

Pete went out and Fred locked the door and proceeded to open his trunk. In a few minutes he had changed his clothes, putting on a suit of coarse material suitable for roughing it. Then he put a pair of strange looking gloves in his pocket, together with a sound black rubber ball the size of an egg—with a small nozzle to it.

That done he went to the window and sat down with a book.

But he had not been seated ten minutes when a knock at the door was heard.

"Come in," he called.

The door opened and three of the boys came in—Dick Duncan among them.

"Well, I was wondering if any of you fellows would call," he said. "Glad to see you. Take seats. If there is anything I hate it's being left to amuse myself."

"Ditto," laughed Joe Jencks. "But there's no fun staying in doors. Come down to the river with us."

"Swimming?"

"No—boating."

"All right. I can pull an oar like an old sailor," and he rose up and put on a cap.

They went out together and passed down the stairs, laughing and chatting like boys always do when not in a cemetery.

They went down one of the winding paths toward the river, where there was a big boat-house.

No sooner were they inside the house than Dick Duncan called out:

"Do your duty, boys!"

There were seven in all, and they made a rush at Fred.

"Hello! Hello! What's the game?" he cried, springing back and wriggling from the grasp of two or three who had seized hold of him.

"Oh, we're going to put you through the mill!" cried several, as they rushed upon him.

"Where's the mill?" he asked, dodging and wriggling away.

"Right here!" they cried, and the next moment they piled on him.

By almost superhuman efforts he got away and yanked that India rubber ball out of his pocket, and began squirting a tiny stream of something into their faces. They had crowded him into a corner, where it was too dark for them to see it. But as each one got it in the face he staggered away, gasping for breath and turning inside out. A horrible stench, such as no human nose or stomach could withstand, assailed them.

"Oh, Lord!" gasped Dick, staggering away and holding one hand on his nose and the other on his stomach. The next moment he gave up his dinner, with remnants of his breakfast and supper.

The others were in the same fix. Terry Olcott gasped out:

"I've been dead a month—Lord, won't somebody bury me! Ough! Ah!"

Tom Tipps staggered out into the open air and fell to the ground.

Fred went reeling out, too, crying out:

"Who busted that mill?" and the next moment cast the rubber ball into the river, no one seeing it.

They were all groaning, retching and bidding good-by to their dinner. Some were dreadfully sick. Joe Jencks looked like death, so ashen hued was he in the face.

"Where's the undertaker?" Fred called out. "Somebody must bury us."

"Oh, Lord—what is it?" groaned Terry, doubling up and gasping.

"Yes—what is it?" groaned Dick.

"Wasn't it the mill?" Fred asked. "Is this the game you play on new-comers at the academy?"

"No—no!" gasped Tom. "Oh—ough!"

"Well, I can't stand this sort of thing. I'm going to have a row or else go back to the academy. It lays over anything I ever ran up against in all my life," and he went to one of the boats, leaped into it, and rowed out into the river till he was out of range of the terrible effluvia.

He chuckled.

He bent over double in his efforts to keep from roaring out in a hilarious hurricane of laughter.

"Done up the whole crowd—seven of 'em!" he groaned, "and didn't get a drop of it on my clothes. Oh, oh! Can I keep my face straight when I see 'em again? Dick Dunkey is the sickest one of the lot!"

He rowed half a mile up the river and back again. The boys had stripped and were in the river—the only way they could get away from the terrible effluvia that caused a sickening nausea.

"There he comes," he heard one of them say. "Overturn the boat and soak him!"

"Yes—drown him!" he heard another say in an undertone, as they all swam toward him.

He pulled out of their reach.

"Let me get in, Fred!" called Joe Jencks.

"Excuse me—I would if I were undressed," he replied. "You boys would upset me for the fun of the thing."

"No—no—I wouldn't," said Joe.

"Oh, after that little racket in the house there I won't trust you. That was the meanest thing yet."

"What was?" Tom asked.

"That sweet smelling thing you turned loose in there."

"Lord, I wish I knew what it was," said Terry. "Did you get any of it on you?"

"I got some of it on my left cheek, but none on my clothes."

"Say, Fred—let me in there—I'm threatened with cramps."

"Not on your life, my boy."

"Would you let him drown?" Joe called out.

"Answer that yourself. You're in there with him. I'm going ashore," and he pulled for the boat-house where he soon landed.

"Say, Fred, go up to the house and tell Pete to bring me down a suit of clothes from my room," called out Tom.

"Why don't you put on your clothes here?" he asked.

"Oh, they'd run out the whole faculty and kill half the family. You have none of that odor on your clothes, so be a good fellow and tell Pete to bring us a suit from our rooms."

"All of you want clothes?"

"Yes, all of us," they replied.

"Well, so long. I guess that smell will kill the coon, though," and he turned and wended his way back up to the academy, where he told the porter what the boys wanted.

"Goshamighty! Has dey done gone an' run up ag'in er skunk?"

"I don't know what they ran up against, but it's just the worst thing I ever tackled in the way of a smell."

"De Lawd sabe us! I'se got to smell it too! I declar ter gracious, dem boys do beat de ole 'un for gittin' up trouble."

"They're a mighty sick crowd, Charcoal," said Fred. "It made me sick, too, for a while, but luckily I didn't get any of it on my clothes."

"Did dey do anyfing to yer?"

"Well, they started in to do me up, but in scrambling round in the boat-house we got up in a corner when that terrible odor broke in on us."

"Dat's a skunk, sure. Dey call 'em polecats down Souf, an' dar ain't nuffin kin stan' up to it—no, sah, nuffin," and he went up to the boys' rooms to get the clothes they had asked for.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOG FIGHT IN THE DORMITORY.

Two hours later when the boys came up from the boat-house they saw Fred standing on the porch of the Lambert cottage talking to the professor's daughter, who was laughing heartily at something he had said.

"How sad they all look!" exclaimed Miss Lambert. "I wonder what has happened to them?"

"Do they appear any way unusual?" Fred asked, and they heard him.

Oh, but they were mad.

They had consulted and come to the conclusion that he had scented them, and each had registered the sincerest vow of his life to get hunk with him.

A little later Fred returned to the dormitory, and met Dick and Joe on the stoop.

"Did you find out what it was?" he asked. "Pete said it was a skunk."

"Skunk nothing!" returned Dick. "It wasn't half as sweet as a skunk."

"It was pretty strong," assented Fred. "It gave

me a twist in my 'innards' I won't get over in a week."

"You won't get over it in a year," said Dick, with a mysterious shake of his head.

"Well, a dose of it would last me fully that long," remarked Fred, with an innocence that caused Joe to explode with laughter and ask:

"Say, Fearnot—what in thunder was it, anyway?"

Fred looked at him with an innocent, inquiring look in his eyes, and said:

"Why, how should I know. Wasn't it really a skunk?"

"Naw—you did it."

"If I could smell like that I'd dig my own grave and bury myself," he remarked. "You can't put up that job on me. Have you looked for it?"

His apparent earnestness completely satisfied them of his innocence.

They little dreamed what a consummate actor he was.

"Well, whatever it was I don't care to run up against any more. But how is it you didn't get any of it?" and Dick eyed him suspiciously.

"I thought I did get some of it—a whole barrel of it. Haven't I got a nose on my face?"

Just then Pete came up from the boat-house. His flat nose was in the air, but a broad gleam of ivory extended clear across his black face.

"What was it, Charcoal?" Fred asked him.

"Fo' de Lawd, I dunno, sah."

"Get a bottle of it, and bring it up for Dr. Allen to test it," suggested Joe.

"Yes—that's the way to find out what it was," said Fred.

"No sah—no sah!" he replied, shaking his head. "I doan bottle no sich stuff as dat!" and he went down to his quarters, grinning from ear to ear. He was glad the boys had met with something that got the best of them.

They had made life a burden to him in the past, and but few had given him as much in six months as Fred had in one day.

The rest of the day was spent by the boys in cogitation.

They didn't know what to think about the Waterloo that had overtaken them.

While Dick and Joe were satisfied that Fred had nothing to do with it, they were still determined to haze him. The others believed he had hazed them most outrageously and wanted revenge for it.

The rule was that everybody in the dormitory should be in bed at nine o'clock, and lights out.

Fred had no room-mate, but the others were paired off.

Dick and Joe occupied room 42, and Tom and Terry were in 46—two doors beyond, in the same corridor. There was an open transom over each door.

About midnight there was the sound of a dog fight in Tom's room—a regular ripper—and every boy in

that end of the hall sprang out of bed and bounded out into the corridor.

Yells of terror came from Tom and Terry, and a moment or two later they dashed right out in their night shirts, hair on end and eyes bulging.

"What's the matter?" came from everybody.

"Burglars!"

"Thieves!"

"Murder!"

The uproar was tremendous, as over two score of boys were in the corridor—and still the fight went on.

"They're in my room under the bed!" yelled Tom.

"Whose dogs are they?"

Brown, the assistant teacher appeared with his lamp. He was in a rage.

"Who brought those dogs in here?" he demanded in angry tones.

"They're in Tom's room!" cried one.

Suddenly the two dogs were heard to go through the open window, and fall with a thud on the ground twenty feet below.

Each dog gave a yelp as he struck the ground.

"There! They've gone through the window!" cried a dozen boys at once.

The whole crowd rushed into Tom's room.

There was the open window, two overturned chairs (upset by Tom and Terry in escaping from the room) but it was too dark to see anything beyond it.

"Mr. Tipps and Mr. Olcott," said Brown, very severely, looking at the two boys, "what have you to say about those dogs being in your room?"

"I don't know a thing about 'em," said Tom.

"Neither do I," put in Terry.

"Of course not; of course you don't," and the sarcasm in the teacher's tones was unmistakable.

"But they were in there. How did they get in?"

"Blest if I know," replied Tom. "I was asleep when the noise of the fight awoke me."

"So was I," added Terry. "Somebody must have thrown 'em in on us."

"Well, I doubt if you can make the professor believe such a story," said Brown. "I don't believe either of you."

"I'll give ten dollars to know who threw 'em in there," said Tom. "I like fun and jokes as well as anybody, but a joke that sets the old man on top of me isn't appreciated. I can lick the boy that did it!" and Tom was mad all through, for he feared expulsion from the academy.

Professor Lambert was down on cock fighting, prize fights and dog fights, and the boys knew it.

"That isn't the way to settle it," said Brown. "It's all nonsense to say somebody threw the dogs through the transom," and he looked up at the transom as he spoke. "Only a very small dog could go through there anyway—one not larger than a cat."

"I'd make oath on all the Bibles in the State that I never had any dog in there—nor anywhere else on the academy grounds!" said Tom, very much excited.

"So would I," said Terry.

"Oh, you're a pair!" said Brown, in no way con-

vinced. "Go back to bed, all of you, and let us have a little sleep."

Tom and Terry went in and shut the door with a slam. The teacher turned to speak to some of the other boys, when he was horrified to hear a girlish giggle come through the transom, followed by:

"My! didn't they go for each other! But you must find 'em for me in the morning."

The face of the teacher was a picture to look at.

The boys were as much amazed as he was.

"Oh, this is too much!" said Brown. "Here, Tipps, open this door!"

Tom opened the door and the teacher rushed in, glared all round the room, opened the closet door, pulled out the clothes hanging up in there, and then got down on his hands and knees to peer under the bed.

Of course no girl was there, and he rose to his feet with a face that was a greater puzzle than any Euclid ever solved.

He glared at Tom whose face was as white as a sheet.

His scared look convinced Brown that he was a guilty reprobate.

"Go to bed—all of you!" he said. "I'll report this matter to the professor in the morning," and with that he strode away to his own room.

During all the excitement Fred stood leaning against the wall, a quiet spectator and listener.

"Well," said he to one of the boys, after Brown left, "this lays over anything I ever saw or heard of," and he chuckled. "Tom and Terry must be regular old chips from the original stump. Do they get up these rackets often?"

"Never knew 'em to," replied the student, "and I've been here one term. They are pretty lively ones, though. If Miss Eunice can't beg off for 'em, it'll go hard with 'em."

They all gradually filtered through the doors along the corridor, and in a little while all was quiet again.

The next morning the boys were up early looking for the dogs. No sign of tracks under the window of Tom's room was found—but it had rained hard just before daybreak, hence it was hardly expected that any tracks could be seen.

As soon as he could catch sight of her, Tom made haste to beg the professor's daughter to ask Mr. Brown not to report the matter to her father until he could investigate and find out who did it.

She promised to do so, and she kept her promise.

Brown was a good-hearted fellow, and was ready to do anything to please her. Thus the two boys remained a prey to a most excruciating suspense.

It being Sunday the boys had nothing to do but attend church. It was not compulsory on them to do so, but the majority of them did for divers reasons.

That afternoon Fred sat on one of the seats under a big tree, near the Lambert cottage, with three other boys, and geyed Charcoal, who had sauntered down that way, till the porter was the worst puzzled coon ever seen on those grounds. He explained to

him why a black man's kinks never grew straight like a white man's hair, and the other three roared so hilariously the professor came out on his porch and rebuked them.

CHAPTER VI.

"I'M ALL RIGHT!"—"WHO DID IT?"

ON Monday Fred took his place in the classes to which Mr. Tracy's report to the professor assigned him, and in every lesson he held his own with the brightest members of each class. The teachers were pleased with him, for his politeness won them completely.

At the end of the first day the boys who had been trying to size him up were still puzzled. They had not hazed him and were more determined than ever to do so.

They invited him to participate in several games, and as they played he proved to be equal to the best, and seemed to know all the rules.

As a sprinter he outran the fleetest, and as for jumping he was a marvel—a revelation.

They had never seen one who could beat Terry Olcott, the champion runner and jumper of the academy.

It broke Terry all up, and he soured on him.

"I guess I can knock you out with the gloves," he said to Fred.

"Well, you ought to—you are taller and heavier than I am."

"Let's put 'em on and try it," said Terry, confident he would be able to knock him out.

"Oh, I don't care to be punched and laughed at," he answered.

"I guess you're afraid," sneered Dick Duncan.

"Oh, no—not afraid—just prudent, that's all. Terry is larger and stronger than I am. I'm willing to let him claim championship with the gloves."

"Bah! You talk well."

"Glad to know it. Only fools lack the art of expressing themselves properly. I'll try the gloves with you."

"I don't care to. I am not doing anything with the gloves."

"Are you afraid?"

"No."

"Only prudent—like me, eh?" and the laugh was on Dick, a thing he could not well stand. It irritated him and he made a hot retort.

"Oh, keep your temper. What's the matter with you, anyway?"

"There's nothing the matter with me; I'm all right."

"Have you a doctor's certificate to that effect?"

The boys chuckled, and Dick, to their very great surprise, slapped him on the face.

There was a commotion for about five seconds, and then two of the boys raised Dick up from the ground. He was limp and groggy, so dazed he hardly knew whether he was alive.

Fred stood quietly by, looking on as though he had no interest whatever in the proceedings.

"Give him a drink of water," he said. "Something's worrying him."

"What hurt you, Dick?" Tom Tipps asked, coming up at the moment.

Dick really couldn't tell—he hardly knew.

But Joe Jencks informed Tom what had happened.

"Slapped Fred's face, did he? That is a violation of the rules."

"Oh, hang the rules!" said Terry, "they don't apply here."

"Nor in your room in a dog fight," laughed Joe.

"You want to let that dog business alone—see?" snapped Terry.

"How about the girl—let her alone, too?"

Terry made a pass at Joe who dodged and escaped it, without losing his temper.

In the meantime Dick walked away without saying a word to anyone. The boys looked at him and saw written on his back:

"I'm all right."

They roared with laughter.

Boys are merciless teasers at times, and they let him go to his room with the chalked letters on his back.

"Who did it?" Joe asked.

"It was done by a puppy," said Terry. "A sneak—a coward!"

"Whose got any chalk in this crowd?" Fred asked. "That's the way to find out!"

"Tom, search us," said Joe. "You were not here when the trouble began."

"Yes; search us!" cried several, and every boy held up his hands. Tom went through their pockets.

"Here it is," said he, drawing a piece of chalk from Terry's pocket.

"Then he's the puppy," said Fred.

Terry knew he had been tricked.

He dashed at Fred like a tiger.

In about five seconds he had met the same fate that overtook Dick.

He lay in a heap on the ground.

"He can't fight any better than a puppy, either," laughed Fred.

The boys were astonished.

Terry was the champion rustler of the school.

They didn't raise him up as they did Dick, but stood by gazing at Fred.

"How'd you do it?" Joe asked.

"Want me to show you?"

"Yes—but don't make me your subject. I am not tough enough."

Terry scrambled to his feet after a minute or two and found the boys laughing at him.

"Well, for a chap who calls himself a puppy, sneak and coward, you are the best specimen I ever saw," said Fred. "I am surprised you are allowed to associate with the others of the class."

"You put that chalk in my pocket," said Terry.

"Take that back, you puppy, sneak and coward, or

I'll turn you inside out in one minute!" and Fred started to throw off his coat.

"Well, somebody put it there," said Terry, turning pale.

"Do you say I did?"

"No-oo," he drawled, hesitatingly.

"Very well. I have an opinion of you. You thought you could lick me, and have been trying to get a chance to do so ever since I arrived. I don't like bullies, or those who have bull-dogs under their beds 'of nights. When your head begins to swell come to me and I'll cure you."

Terry was licked—utterly routed—and had to submit to the tongue lashing Fred gave him.

The boys were careful to keep the affair from becoming known to the faculty. But it did spread among the boys, and scores of them were glad the young bully had met his match.

Still, Terry had a clique of classmates who resolved to give Fred a hazing worse than anyone had ever received at the academy, and one night, a week later, seven of them crept to his room door and gently rapped on it.

Everybody but themselves in the dormitory was asleep.

The rapping awoke Fred.

He got up and went to the door to listen.

He instantly divined what was up, and going to a drawer in the bureau, took from it an insect powder blower, stood up on a chair and blew the contents of it through the transom—sending a cloud of fine cayenne pepper over their heads.

It settled down upon them.

They breathed it—swallowed it—got it in their eyes and began sneezing.

A moment later they retreated, and sneezing, coughing and objurgations were heard in four or five rooms during the rest of the night.

Fred went back to bed, chuckling quietly to himself.

The next morning three of the boys were unable to study; their eyes were in a bad way.

All had red eyes.

Oh, what a mad lot they were!

Fred was innocent-looking as a babe, and asked each one of the victims what the trouble was.

Dick told him to go to blazes.

"Well, you're the first red-eyed 'Dunkey' I ever saw," returned Fred.

At recess three of them had written on their backs:

"Oh, my eye!"

And no one but Fred knew how the words got there.

The boys enjoyed it, but the victims were wild with rage.

The worst of it was they didn't know how they had been hurt. They never heard Fred move in his room after they knocked on his door, and therefore did not suspect that he had played the game on them.

By some means, Pete, the black porter, heard of the dog fight at midnight in Tom and Terry's room.

He heard the boys talking about it, and at once connected it with the bull-dog he had heard growling in one of Fred's grips.

It made him grin from ear to ear, and when he got the chance he asked Fred about it.

"It wasn't my dog," said Fred, shaking his head.

"How's you keepin' dat dog?" Pete asked.

"In my grip, of course."

"How's you feedin' 'im?"

"On eggs."

"Aigs!"

"Yes. He eats a dozen a day, and keeps fat on them."

"Goshamighty! How he keep erlibe in dat grip? How's he gittin air?"

"Oh, he gets air enough. He's part turtle. A turtle can come up to the surface of the water, take in all the air he wants and then go back to the bottom for a whole day. I give my dog air once a day and he just goes to sleep and keeps quiet."

Pete's eyes bulged.

"Don't say anything about it, Charcoal," cautioned Fred. "Mr. Brown is looking for those dogs yet, and if he hears of my dog I'll have to send him away."

"No, sah—I ain't gwine to say nuffin 'bout it."

But he did—in a moment of weakness he said to one of the kitchen maids, a wench nearly as black as himself, that Fred kept a bull-dog up in his room.

In a few days Miss Lambert, who had been prevailed upon to persuade Brown not to report the dog fight to the professor, got hold of Pete's story, and sent for him.

Pete dared not go back on what he had told Cynthia, and owned up that Fred kept a bull-dog in one of his grips up in his room.

"What!" she gasped.

"Yessum—I done heerd dat dog er growlin' in dar," and then he felt uneasy about having betrayed the youth who had been so liberal to him.

"Miss Eunice—Honey," he pleaded, "doan youse go an' tole 'im I done said dat. Dat sassy Cynthia no ter go an' tole youse. 'Pears lack er gal ain't got no sense nohow. She allus gettin' de fool men inter trouble, an' dat's er fac'!"

"I won't tell who told me, Peter," she said. "But what nonsense to say a dog can be kept in a grip."

"Miss Eunice, I done heerd 'im er growlin' in dar, and he done tole me hissself it was his dog."

"Well, I want to find out about it, Peter," said she, turning away.

CHAPTER VII.

FRED AND THE PROFESSOR'S DAUGHTER—THE SINKING OF THE SHELL—"I'LL HAUNT YOU TO YOUR GRAVES."

A DAY or two after Pete had told the professor's daughter the improbable story about the dog up in Fred's room, she saw him out on the lawn, and beckoned to him.

Of course Fred responded by promptly joining her near the Lambert cottage, raising his hat and bowing as he approached.

"What kind of a dog is that you have in one of your grips, Mr. Fearnot?" she asked him.

He was rattled for a brief moment.

Then he laughed.

"You see, I know who is to blame for that disturbance in room 40 the other night," she remarked. "I am surprised at your letting innocent ones suffer for your own act."

He kept on laughing and she went on:

"I had to beg Mr. Brown not to report the affair. You must send the dog away. He will make more trouble and might cause father to send you away."

"Miss Lambert, I confess to having a very beautiful dog in my grip, but I assure you on my honor that he has never been out of the grip since I came here. How did you hear of it?"

"Never mind how I found it out," said she. "You must send him away. Are there any other dogs in the dormitory?"

"I've never seen any there."

"Do you know of any there?"

"I do not. Will you accept the dog as a present from me. I really don't wish to send him away."

"Really, I don't know how I could keep him. I fear he'll make no end of trouble."

"You could keep him in a grip, a box, or any other thing you wish. He is perfectly harmless."

"Can you bring him here and let me see him?"

"Certainly," and he hurried away to the dormitory and bounded up the stairs to his room. She waited under the big tree in front of the cottage.

When he returned he had a beautiful majolica ware dog under his arm, a little larger than a cat.

She began laughing before he reached her side, for she saw what it was.

"Oh, dear," she laughed, "and is that the dog?"

"Yes, the only one I have. Isn't he a beauty?" and he held it up for her to admire it.

It was a beautiful image—a real work of art. Her eyes sparkled as she looked at it. Then she fell to laughing again.

"Is this the dog that raised such a row the other night?" she asked.

"Oh, he is a fighter from away back," he laughed.

"Well, I can't understand it. Mr. Brown says there were two dogs fighting in room 40."

"My room is 34 and this is my dog—he is yours now—if you will accept him with my compliments."

"Thank you—I—I didn't mean to ask you to send him away—a beautiful thing like this."

"Oh, that's all right—it gave me the chance to offer him to you," and he placed the image in her arms as he spoke. She took it and held it as a woman would hold a baby, and thanked him again.

"Let me take him into the house. Mother will be so surprised when she comes in," and she started toward the cottage with it.

Suddenly the image gave a fierce growl and snap.

She shrieked and dropped it, making a dash for the house in a panic.

Fred ran and picked it up, laughing heartily.

On the stoop she turned and looked at him in dumfounded amazement.

"He doesn't want to leave me," he said, rubbing his hand caressingly over the head of the image.

"Well, I never had such a fright before in my life," she said. "Do you wind it up to make it do that way?"

"No," he laughed. "That was me—not the dog."

"Oh, my! It seemed to come from the image," and she took it again and looked at it as if half afraid.

"Please don't tell anyone about it. I tell you about it so you may understand how it happened."

"Well! It was the most natural thing I ever heard. Make him growl again, please."

She held it and watched it.

When the sudden snarl and snap came she gave a start and would have dropped it had he not caught it in time.

She knew nothing of ventriloquism, and laughed heartily at his good imitation, as she called it.

"Here comes Cynthia—give her a scare with it."

The black wench came to the cottage with a bundle of clothes from the laundry. Fred took the dog image and held it in his arms.

"Cynthia," called Eunice. "Come here and see what a beautiful present Mr. Fearnot has given me."

The girl came up and looked at it, saying:

"De land's sake, Miss Eunice. It looks jes' like er dog, don't it?" and she reached out her hand to pat the image on the head. Fred jabbed it at her with the fierce growling and snapping of a dog in a fight.

She gave a yell and sent the laundry flying in a shower, keeled over backward in a heap, sprang to her feet, and ran shrieking back whence she came.

Eunice nearly had a fit, she laughed so violently.

Other servants came running up, and Fred said:

"Not a word, Miss Lambert. Just tell her she's crazy."

She took the dog in her arms and told the servants to pick up the laundry, saying Cynthia was frightened at her dog which wasn't a dog at all.

Cynthia never heard the last of it.

Fred returned to his quarters, and there met some of the boys who said the champion boat club of the High School, over in Avon, had challenged the boat club of the academy to a race the next day.

"Good!" he said. "I want to see that."

"Are you a good rower?" Joe Jencks asked him.

"I've done some rowing," he replied.

"Well, they have challenged us for a single pair of oars, and our champion's eyes are so sore he can't row. Unless you row we'll have to decline the challenge."

"Why not let your next best oarsman row the match?" he asked.

"Because he'll be beaten. Their champion is a good one—hard to beat."

"Well, we don't want to go in and be beaten. I wouldn't undertake it without any practice."

"You can take a pull this afternoon and early tomorrow morning."

Suspicion never entered Fred's mind, so he said he'd take a trial spin in the shell, and see what he could do with it.

So they went down to the boat-house and—a score of them—some with eyes inflamed, and there he inspected the shell and oars.

Everything seemed to be all right, and he went into the boat-house to put on the rowing suit—an undershirt and tights. When ready, he took his seat in the shell, seized the oars, and one of the boys shoved the boat out into the stream.

He turned up stream, and sent the light shell skimming through the water like a thing of life.

But ere he had gone fifty yards he found the boat rapidly filling.

The boys had drawn out a plug, and were now waiting to laugh at him as he sank.

He stopped rowing, let go of the oars, and they floated away with the current.

“Boys,” he cried, “I'll haunt you to your graves for this! I can't swim!”

The boat went down till his head disappeared under the water.

“He can swim like a duck!” laughed Dick Duncan.

“Of course he can, or he'd never got into it,” assented Terry Olcott.

“Ah! There's the boat?” cried several as the boat reappeared—bottom upwards—and floated with the current.

Then they waited a minute or two, expecting to see him rise to the surface and strike out for the boat-house.

Two minutes, three, four passed, and he was not seen.

Every boy looked at his companion with a pallor on his face that told of a horror in his soul.

“He's drowned!” gasped Joe.

“Lord, no!” gasped a half dozen in a breath.

“I thought he could swim!” groaned one in anguish.

“So did I!” moaned another.

They were too demoralized to think of rescuing the boat, which floated away with the current.

“I didn't do it!” stammered Dick Duncan, who had drawn the plug just as the boat was shoved out into the stream.

“Yes you did—you pulled the plug out!” cried a half dozen—all eager to shift the responsibility.

They were the worst frightened lot of boys ever seen anywhere.

“We must get that boat or people will say we didn't try to save him!” gasped one of the boys.

“Yes—yes—it's gone round the bend!” cried Terry Olcott. “Gimme a pair of oars, quick!” and he leaped into a boat.

Joe Jencks followed him.

Oars were handed out to them and they pulled away for all they were worth.

They overtook the upturned shell nearly a quarter of a mile below, round the bend in the river, righted it and took it in tow.

The sun went down before they reached the boat-house.

The boys took Fred's clothes up to the dormitory and nearly created a panic when they told the story of his drowning.

Professor Lambert was shocked. Mrs. Lambert and Eunice burst into tears, for they liked the poor boy more than anyone who had ever come to the academy—he was so polite and gentlemanly in his deportment.

The night was intensely dark.

The professor sent a messenger into Avon to report to the authorities there.

They decided that it was useless to drag the river for the body on such a dark night, but made preparations to do so at daylight.

In the meantime, the professor questioned the boys as to how the accident happened.

They one and all said the shell capsized and he went down—not appearing again. They lied like politicians.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW FRED GOT HIS REVENGE.

Now what had become of Fred!

He was very far from being drowned.

Indeed, he was having fun with the boys all the time.

When he saw the shell rapidly filling with water, he understood just what had been done. They were there to have the laugh on him as he swam out.

There was no way for him to escape the ducking.

“They've got me,” he said to himself, “but I'll give 'em a scare and make 'em think I can't swim,” and he did so, calling out that he would haunt them to their graves.

As soon as he was under the water he turned out of the boat, and let it rise to the surface bottom upwards.

Then he rose to the surface under it, catching hold of the seat and raising himself up high enough to find breathing space without being seen by the boys.

Thus he floated with the current, chuckling to himself over the scare he was giving them. But he wondered that none of them came to save the boat, as it was going down stream at the rate of nearly three miles an hour.

By and by he concluded to take a peep at his surroundings, and when he did so found that he had just turned the bend in the river, and was out of sight of the boat-house.

“I'll swim ashore and hide in the bushes till it's dark,” said he to himself, and suiting his action to his words, at once abandoned the boat and struck out for the bank.

He had scarcely reached the bushes when he saw another boat rowed by two of the boys, coming rapidly round the bend. They pulled for the abandoned shell with all their might, and when they overtook it proceeded to right it, and tow it back up the stream.

“Oh, but they are a sick lot,” he chuckled to him-

self, as he watched them. "They think my death lies at their door—that the trick they played me caused it. How they will lie about it to the professor."

Night had come, and the boys at the boat-house wended their way back to the academy. Under cover of darkness, Fred returned to the boat-house and made a search for his clothes.

He could not find them.

"They have taken 'em up to the dormitory," he said. "Hanged if I don't go up there and play ghost on 'em!" and as it was a very dark night, he could go without being seen.

On reaching the dormitory he saw that great confusion reigned within.

The professor was giving orders with startling energy.

A messenger was sent hurriedly to Avon, on the other side of the river, after which the boys were questioned by Professor Lambert.

Fred got up close enough to hear how they lied.

No one was to blame.

He went out alone, and was capsized and drowned before they could get to him.

Fred chuckled as he listened.

He chuckled still more as he looked at the white, scared faces of the boys.

He could see them plainly in the light through an open window.

When they went up to their rooms he crept round to the cottage where Mrs. Lambert and Eunice were wringing their hands, and weeping.

"By George!" thought Fred. "Do they care for any of us, boys! Do they care anything for me? Miss Eunice is crying as if utterly heart-broken. I feel mean about this, hanged if I don't. But to go in there and tell 'em I'm all right would give 'em both a fit."

He was going to turn away, when he heard Eunice sob out:

"Oh, he was such a gentlemanly student! I liked him above all the boys."

"So did I," said her mother. "It is perfectly awful!"

Fred went away to think.

He was no longer in a joking mood.

Did the fair Eunice like him enough to thus weep and mourn over his death?

Did the tall, cold-eyed wife of the professor, who ruled the boys with an iron will, really think well of him?

"I wouldn't have believed it," he muttered, as he made his way back to the dormitory. "I feel mean about giving them such a turn, but it can't be helped now. I'll just wait for a chance to give those boys a shaking up as soon as the professor and the teachers have left them. Dick and Terry are the ones who put up the job on me—with Tom to back them. I'll give them the scare of their lives as soon as I can get into my room. Hope they haven't locked my room up. The key was in my trouser pocket."

He managed to slip into the house and hide under

the stairs till the lights were out at nine o'clock. Then he crept up the stairs and made his way along the corridor to his room.

To his great joy he found the door unlocked, and slipping inside found that his clothes had been thrown on the bed in the hurry and excitement. He got the key and locked the door on the inside.

Then he waited a half hour, and during that time heard footsteps out in the corridor—boys in their stocking feet going to other rooms.

It was dark in the corridor, so he slipped out and crept along till he reached the door of room 40. There he peeped through the key-hole and saw a group of over a dozen boys in whispered consultation. They had a paper shade over the lamp to prevent the light from being seen against the window.

He could not hear what they were saying, for they spoke in whispers.

Suddenly the door opened and one of the boys came out and went tip-toeing along the corridor, closing the door softly behind him.

He did not see Fred, who shrank back out of the way.

The moment he was gone Fred opened the door and glided into the room. He was in his rowing suit just as he went down with the shell.

One or two of the boys looked up and saw him in the dim light that came through the paper that enveloped the lamp. He gave a frightful yell, sprang up, raised the window and leaped out to the ground, fully twenty feet below.

The others were paralyzed with horror, and, yelling like lunatics, went through the window, too—all but two. They were speechless with horror and simply fell off their chairs to the floor, trembling, gasping and glaring at Fred as though at a ghost.

Fred glared at them a few brief moments and then turned and glided away to his room, shut the door and went to bed.

There he lay and listened to the excitement that followed his appearance. He heard Tracy, Brown and the other teachers out in the corridor demanding to know what had happened.

"Oh, Lord, sir, I dunno!" he heard one of the boys from a room say. "I heard the boys yell in room 40."

Tracy and Brown went into room 40 and found two of the boys just coming out of a faint.

"What in the world has happened?" Tracy asked.

"Lord, sir—it was Fred's ghost!" said one of the boys.

"What!"

"We were sitting in here talking when the door opened and Fred stalked in and glared at us—just as he looked when he went down out of sight in the water?"

"Nonsense—where are the others who were in here?"

"They went through the window, sir," replied the boy, trembling like a leaf.

"What—through the window?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then some of them must be hurt," and he started to go out into the corridor to make his way downstairs when he met Brown and several of the boys. The latter were limping—some of them badly.

"Mr. Tracy, over a dozen of the boys leaped from the window of room 40," said Brown, "and I guess some of them are hurt."

"They must be," returned Tracy. "This is fast becoming a lunatic asylum, Mr. Brown."

"It seems so, sir. They say they saw young Fearnot's ghost."

"Yes—lunatics—all of them. What a pity it is we have no cells to lock them up in. Boys and old women believe in such things."

Other boys came straggling in, all more or less hurt. Several had hurts that were bleeding—one had a shoulder dislocated and was in an agony of pain.

"What's the matter, Mr. Tracy?" Fred asked, putting his head out the half opened door of his room.

"Ow—wow—ough—oh, Lord?" came from the boys, who were about the teacher out in the corridor.

"Is it you, Fred?" Tracy asked, looking at him in no little amazement.

"Yes, sir, but I can't get any sleep from the racket. What's the trouble?"

"A lot of these boys have gone crazy. We'll have physicians here to-morrow to examine them. I guess a lot of them will be sent to the lunatic asylum."

"It's strange it hasn't been done before. I thought some of them were crazy when I first came here."

"They reported you drowned. How is it you are here and alive?"

"That shows they are crazy. I am not drowned at all, but very much alive—as you see."

"Yes—yes—Brown, kindly go and inform Professor Lambert that young Fearnot is here and very much alive—but that a lot of the boys are lunatics."

"Yes, sir," and Brown turned away to carry the news to the cottage.

Fred went out into the corridor, which was now crowded with the boys who slept in that end of the big dormitory. They shook his hands and plied him with questions as to how he escaped drowning.

"Oh, you fellows can't drown me," he laughed. "It was a neat trick they played me, and they had their laugh. They stood there on the float in front of the boat-house and laughed as I went down out of sight. But the fishes were good to me. They told me of the job that had been put up on me, and hid me away till dark came on, and then put me ashore. I had my laugh when I saw them go through that window," and he chuckled and laughed with glee that caused even the solemn Tracy to smile.

CHAPTER IX.

FRED GIVES DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF HIS ESCAPE FROM DROWNING.

MR. TRACY was astonished at hearing Fred mention the word trick, and asked him what the trick was.

"I won't give them away, sir," he laughed. "It was simply a joke they played on me, and since they are punished enough already I hope you won't say anything about it."

"That's all right, sir, but the lying they did is worse than a thousand tricks, as you call it. It is simply abominable. They should have told the plain truth about it."

"They were too badly frightened to think of that, sir. Please don't report it."

"I shall not bother with it—it's Brown's business, as you are all under his charge in this department," and he turned and left them—going back to his quarters.

Then Fred called on the boys who had dived through the window. Everyone of them was hurt more or less. They frankly owned up to being scared most to death, and apologized.

"Oh, don't apologize," he laughed. "Let it stand at that. I'm satisfied and hope you fellows will try to put me through again. The truth is I like it. Never had so much fun in my life," and he chuckled till they had to join him.

"How the deuce did you escape drowning?" Terry Olcott, his bitterest enemy asked.

"Oh, the fishes took care of me," he answered. "They are all laying for you, Terry."

"Laying for me?"

"Yes—the eels, catfish, perches and even the turtles are waiting for a chance at you."

"Lord, what a liar you are!" said Terry, and the boys laughed.

"But I didn't lie to the professor and then dive through a window," retorted Fred. "I'll have the laugh on you to-morrow when the physicians come to examine into your sanity."

"What!" gasped Terry.

"Oh, the boys heard Mr. Tracy say it would be done."

"Yes, so we did," assented nearly a dozen boys.

"Hanged if I'm a lunatic," blurted out Terry.

"You may not be—the physicians are going to examine you to see whether you are or not."

Just then Mr. Brown returned from his visit to the Lambert cottage, and told the boys to go to bed and keep quiet.

"Well, good-night, boys," said Fred, as he left to go to his own room.

Brown followed him.

"See here, now, Fred," he said, "I don't want to report anything you tell me, and won't—so let me have the whole story. There are some things about this business which I can't understand."

Fred then told him and he laughed till he nearly had a fit.

"It has raised a deal of excitement over in Avon," he said, "and Mrs. and Miss Lambert shed some hot tears over your untimely end. You'll have to tell them, and probably the professor, how you escaped."

"Oh, I shall tell them the truth about my escape, but I won't accuse the boys."

"That's all right. I don't believe he suspects that any trick has been played on you."

Brown then left him, and he returned to his bed and slept till the bell awoke him.

He dressed hurriedly and went out into the corridor. A half dozen of the boys were too badly hurt to go down to breakfast.

Some of the boys who arose earlier had told Pete, the porter, how the fishes had taken care of Fred, and the darky believed it. In fact, he was inclined to believe Fred to be in league with some supernatural power that took care of him.

Miss Eunice had shown him the dog he had heard growling in the grip, and he was a puzzled coon. But he loved the boy for all that, and was on the lookout for him when he came down the next morning.

"Youse ain't done been drowned yit, is you?" he exclaimed when he saw him.

"Oh, no; they can't drown me! I just stayed down there with the fishes till night came on, and then I climbed out and came up here to play ghost on the boys."

"How youse stay down dere wif de fishes?" Pete asked.

"Oh, see here, now, old man. There are some things I can't tell, you know. It won't do to give the fish away. You know how the whale treated Jonah when he was thrown into the sea? Well, he went and gave the whole snap away, and ever since then the sharks have been eating human beings when they come their way."

That laid Pete out.

The Jonah and whale story had always been one of the great mysteries with him, and it was one of the things hardest for him to believe. Fred had made it easy for him now, for he believed in him with faith implicit. Hadn't he explained to him how it was that the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet were of lighter color than other parts of his person?

With him the youth was greater than Moses and all the prophets.

He dared not ask any more questions about the mystery of his escape from drowning, however much he wanted to.

"Fred! Fred!" called a girlish voice, and he turned and saw Eunice Lambert on the stoop of the cottage.

She waved her handkerchief at him and he waved his hat.

Mrs. Lambert came out, too, and a moment or two later the professor appeared. They beckoned to him and he went to them.

They grasped his hand and said how glad they were to see him alive, when they had mourned him as dead.

"Thank you!" he said, modestly. "I assure you I appreciate your kindness. I am glad I am alive!"

"So are we," said the professor. "You must explain to us why you are alive after a score of the students reported you drowned."

"I can do that in three words, sir," he laughed.

"In three words! That's a very brief story. I like brevity above all things. Let us hear the story."

"The boys lied!"

"Eh! Is that the explanation?"

"Yes, sir—they are the three words."

"But they must have thought you were dead!"

"No doubt of it, sir. When I appeared before them last night over a dozen of them dived through the window of room 40."

The professor lost his pompous dignity and roared with laughter.

Eunice smiled and seemed more than glad to see the youth.

Mrs. Lambert laughed, too, and in reply to her questions he explained how he escaped.

The professor at once sent word to the authorities that the boy who was supposed to be drowned was alive and all right.

Then they went up to the big dining-room where all the boys saw Fred march in with them—except those who were too badly hurt to leave their rooms.

The physician for the academy looked after their hurts and said it was a mystery how some of them were not killed.

Down in the kitchen Pete was telling the help how the fishes had taken care of Fred in the bottom of the river.

Black Cynthia was the only one who could swallow the story, though. She was prepared to believe anything after her experience with "dat dog."

Teddy O'Hara, the janitor, though, told Pete he was "a naygur, and didn't know nothin' at all, at all."

"Jes' youse ax 'im," said Pete, shaking his head.

"Bedad, an' I will that!" said Teddy, and the doubting son of Erin waited for a chance to do so.

It was not until after school hours that he had the opportunity. Then he and Pete tackled him at the top of the stairs outside that led down to the basement where the janitor had his quarters.

"Yes, it's true, Teddy," said Fred, as seriously as an undertaker.

"Sure, an' it's lying yez are," blurted out Teddy. "I'm no naygur to swallow that!"

"They would believe it in Ireland, Teddy, for there are no snakes there," said Fred. "When you fellows come over here you get mixed up with snakes and don't believe the truth half the time."

"Sure, an' there's no snakes on me," said Teddy, with a determined shake of the head.

"Don't be sure of that, alana. There's a snake about you somewhere. I'm sure of it. You're a bad Irishman to call a gentleman a liar when he tells you the truth. Search your pockets for the snake."

"Sure, an' I will that," and he thrust his hand deep into several of his pockets. Suddenly he gave a wild, Irish whoop, jerked his hand out and a little green snake, cold and clammy, about eighteen inches long and thick as a man's thumb, was dashed into Pete's face.

Then Pete yelled and dashed round the house like an escaping lunatic, while Teddy dived down into his quarters awakening all the echoes of the place with his yells.

Fred quietly picked up the little green gelatine serpent and put it into his pocket.

He had dropped it into Teddy's pocket by a little sleight-of-hand trick.

Scores of the boys ran out to see what had happened.

"Ow! Wow! Lawd sabe us!" yelled Pete, dancing up and down and shaking his clothes. "Oh, de good Lawd sabe us!"

"What's the matter with Pete?" the boys asked.

"Jim-jams," said Fred, laughing.

In the meantime the porter had gotten into the kitchen and given the help there a terrible fright.

"What in the world is the matter?" one of the women asked.

"Oh, de Lawd—snakes!" cried Pete, still shaking his clothes.

At the word "snake" the women screamed and scampered in every direction.

Pete was utterly demoralized till Fred went to him and told him to keep quiet.

"W-w-whar dat snake!" he asked.

"He got away. He was one of the harmless kind."

"Whar dat Irisher?"

"Oh, he's down in his room having a fit, I guess," Fred laughed.

"Goshamighty, he orter hab er dozen fits for flinging er snake in mah face. Whar dat snake come frum?"

"Oh, they are always getting into Irish pockets. They like 'em."

"Goshamighty!"

CHAPTER X.

THE RUNAWAY—FRED MAKES A GALLANT RESCUE.

THE little snake trick settled both the janitor and porter, and never after that did either of them doubt the wildest statement coming from Fred. Nothing could shake their faith in him.

Teddy searched his pockets for snakes every morning after his first experience with the reptile, before putting on his clothes.

Time wore on and Fred studied hard whilst having fun with the boys. He took part in all their games and gradually won the good will of both Terry Olcott and Dick Duncan, who had hated him for the very qualities that others admired.

He wanted to complete his career at school that year, hence the close application to his studies. All the teachers became his friends, and the pompous old Professor Lambert was almost like a father to him.

As for Eunice, she believed in him under all circumstances, and was ever smiling when he was in her presence. But she was popular with all the boys, because she pleaded with her father to be lenient with

them when they incurred his anger—which was quite often the case.

One day he went over to Avon, on the other side of the river, with Joe Jencks, to make some little purchases. While on the street, he saw an open barouche dash by, with four young ladies in it.

The driver was rather reckless, and collided with a light buggy, upsetting it. The horses took fright and made a sudden dash that caused the driver to lose his balance and fall headforemost from his seat.

Quick as a flash Fred saw the danger of the young ladies.

He ran to a hitching-post where several horses were standing, unhitched one and sprang into the saddle.

The next moment he was off like the wind in pursuit of the barouche.

People on the street fled for their lives as the frightened team dashed forward.

Fred urged his horse with frantic energy, and the spirited animal gained rapidly on the team. The terrified girls clung to each other, their white faces appealing for help in mute glances right and left.

Fred overtook them.

A glance showed that the reins were dragging, hence to bound into the barouche would be useless. He dashed alongside one of the horses and sprang upon his back, leaving the saddle horse to go free.

Then he leaned forward and got hold of the reins.

"Whoa, boys!" he called in a firm tone of voice, pulling them back with all his might.

They slackened their speed, and in another moment he turned them into a wagon yard through a big, open gate. The inclosure prevented them from going any further, and the four young ladies were saved.

In a very few minutes some two hundred people had rushed in and surrounded the team. The girls were taken out of the barouche more dead than alive with fright.

"Young man," said a citizen, "you did a bold, fearless thing—and saved the lives of those girls."

"Well, that's what I wanted to do," he replied. "I knew it would be up with them if somebody didn't stop 'em."

Then scores wanted to shake his hands. They called him a hero and many other complimentary names.

"Better wait," he laughed. "I may be arrested as a horse thief. I took another man's horse without leave."

"That's all right, my boy!" sung out a man in the crowd. "It was my horse. You won't be arrested."

"Glad to hear it," he replied. "You've got a splendid horse, let me tell you. Had he been a slow old snail I couldn't have overtaken 'em."

"You bet he is a good horse, and he had a good rider on his back when you mounted him."

The crowd cheered.

"Who are you, young man?" a voice asked.

"I'm a school-boy over at Avon Academy."

"Name! Name!" they called.

"Fred Fearnot—the boy who was reported drowned last month."

"Three cheers for Fearnot!"

The crowd cheered and Fred tried to get away from them. The crowd kept increasing in numbers and they wanted to see and know him.

Then the news came that the driver who fell from his seat had been killed—his neck being broken by the fall.

The little town was thrown into a fever of excitement over the incident. It was a quick, daring thing Fred had done, and men could hardly understand how he had accomplished it.

But hundreds had seen him do it, and as they told it they enlarged upon it till it savored of the incredible.

The young ladies turned out to be four girls of the senior class in the female college at Avon, who were out for a pleasure drive as they often did before.

They were sent home in another carriage without having a chance to thank him for saving their lives. In fact they were so rattled they could hardly have done so had an opportunity been given them.

Joe finally caught up with him.

"Well, you've made yourself famous," he said to him.

"Oh, I guess not. Fame does not come to one so easily as that," he replied. "I am glad I did it, though, for they would have been killed."

"Yes. The driver never moved after he landed on his head," said Joe. "I saw them take him up and carry him into a drug store, where a doctor said his neck was broken."

"Well, have you got my bundle?"

"Yes—I picked it up when you dropped it."

"Good—let's get out of this and go back over the river."

They got away from the crowd and hurried across the bridge.

"Say, Joe—don't say a word about it at the academy," said Fred.

"Why not?"

"Because they will talk about nothing else during the afternoon and evening. Let 'em get the news in some other way."

"All right," laughed Joe, and he kept his promise.

The Avon Herald the next morning, though, had a full account of it, and a half dozen copies were taken at the academy by the teachers.

Then Fred had a time of it.

The boys crowded around him and talked it over, asking a thousand questions.

"Oh, look here, now," he laughed. "Read the paper—you make me tired."

But Eunice and her mother got hold of him, and made him tell the story over to them. The professor shook his hand and congratulated him.

"Would you have done that for me?" Eunice asked him, when she was alone with him a few moments.

"Yes—a thousand times," he replied.

"It was a noble act," she said.

Of course it made him the hero of the school—and of the town. He received notes from each of the four girls whose lives he had saved, thanking him for his brave act, and declaring that they owed their lives to him and would ever hold him in grateful remembrance.

Of course he had to answer each one, and did so in a modest way, saying he had done what was the duty of every man to do under such circumstances, and

that he was glad he had been able to render such service.

A week later, on a beautiful afternoon, five carriages entered the academy grounds and stopped at the steps of the stoop. Seventeen young ladies—the senior class of the girls' High School of Avon, accompanied by their teacher and the principal—alighted.

All the boys were busy with their lessons. But a few minutes later Professor Lambert was summoned by his wife to the reception room below. He went to her and learned that the girls of the High School senior class had come to present Fred Fearnot with a fine gold watch and chain.

"Good! Good!" he said. "You honor yourselves, young ladies, in thus recognizing the brave act of the youth. He is one of our brightest students. Just come up to the recitation room and take him by surprise else I fear he will run away," and he led the entire party up-stairs to the big room where one hundred and fifty boys were at their desks.

The boys were surprised.

The girls and their teachers took seats on the low platform and glanced eagerly at the boys, all looking for Fred, who never suspected why they were there.

"Close your books, boys," said the professor. "We have visitors—the senior class of the girls' High School of Avon and their teachers."

Fred was startled and turned pale, as he gazed at the beautiful maidens. He suspected then that he was in for something, but didn't know what.

The professor then introduced the principal of the High School, a tall, elderly man, who rose to his feet and began a speech, eloquent and stirring, the subject of which was Fred's rescue of four of his senior class pupils from almost certain death. He said they had called to thank him and present him a token of their appreciation in the shape of a gold watch and chain, in which were engraved the names of the four girls.

Fred was staggered for a few moments, for he knew he would have to reply to the speech. As yet the girls had not been able to pick him out.

"Will Mr. Fearnot please come forward and accept this token?" the speaker asked.

Then every boy in the room gazed at Fred. He kept his seat half a minute, trying to pull himself together. Then he arose and went forward.

The boys broke into cheers and that braced him up.

The speaker grasped his hand and at once introduced him to the seventeen girls by name. Then the four girls whom he had rescued were presented by name. Each one smiled, blushed and thanked him; after which the watch and chain were placed in his hand. A deep silence followed.

They were waiting to hear what he had to say.

"Professor Lambert," he said, "as the young ladies' teacher has spoken for them, will you kindly speak for me?"

"Speak for yourself, my boy—speak for yourself!" said the professor.

"How can I, sir? I am worse rattled than those girls were in the carriage that day," and a wave of laughter rolled through the room. The professor fairly shook his sides.

Fred braced up, and looking at the principal of the girl's school, said:

"During the first month of my stay here the boys of this school exerted themselves to haze me. I did my best to prevent them, and I believe I succeeded in doing so. Now, you come with your girls and succeed where all the boys failed. I frankly own up to being hazed, dazed, rattled and charmed."

The boys yelled and cheered, while the girls laughed and blushed.

"I came here to complete my education," he added. "But long before I ever heard of Avon Academy I was taught that man's duty to woman was to love, protect and shield her with the very life of his manhood. I have a mother who has ever been to me all that a mother should be. She loves me and I love, revere and worship her. She is my standard of true womanhood, and I let my mind run back in its fond dreaming to picture her in her girlhood days as like those now here before us. My sister is like these, fair, beautiful, and like the angels in goodness, sweetness of disposition. I picture all girls, all women as good and pure as they, and yield homage to the sex for their sakes. You have given me this beautiful watch and chain. It is worth so much. But the association that comes with it makes it of priceless value to me. I shall give you mine—which was given me by my mother—to be sold by you for the benefit of the sorrowing, widowed mother of the coachman who was killed by the fall from his seat on your carriage. It may not dry her tears or ease the pain in her heart, but it will keep the wolf from her door for a while."

CHAPTER XI.

FRED ACCOMPANIES A FARMER ON A DESPERATE EXPEDITION.

FRED'S speech was a revelation to the students as well as the faculty of Avon Academy. The girls were charmed, and his pathetic words in alluding to the mother of the dead coachman, brought tears to their eyes.

"God bless you, my boy!" exclaimed the principal of the girls' High School, as he received the watch from him. "We'll make it put five hundred dollars into the poor mother's purse."

"I hope it will, sir," returned Fred, and then the ceremony was over.

The girls crowded around him to shake his hand again. They said many kind things to him, each one begging for his autograph.

Mrs. Lambert was so charmed with his little speech she could scarcely refrain from kissing him before the entire school. Eunice heard it, too, and was beside herself with admiration of his tribute to his mother and sister.

Mrs. Lambert invited the visitors to luncheon and they accepted. It took two hours to prepare it, and that gave the seniors of both institutions an opportunity to get acquainted with each other.

But Fred was the lion of the hour, and every girl tried to talk to him, and succeeded. He was very pleasant with them and said many things that amused them very much.

When they went away Fred drew a long breath of relief, saying:

"Well, that was the worst scare I ever had."

"But you didn't faint," said Teacher Brown.

"No, they didn't give me a chance to. They came in on me where I had to stand up and take it. I never run up a white flag."

"Good! I like your grit," said the teacher.

"One has got to have grit or he'll be left," returned Fred. "I'd have given my watch for a chance to get away without being called a coward."

When Eunice Lambert saw him in the evening she asked:

"Have you a picture of your sister?"

"Yes," he answered, "and of my mother, too."

"Will you let me see them?"

"Yes," and he went up to his room after them.

She looked at them in silence for some minutes, and then said:

"They are both beautiful. I wish I could see them."

I would tell them how you praised them to-day. You have won mother's heart completely."

"How about the daughter's heart?" he asked, a mischievous smile on his face as he asked the question.

"Oh, I won't tell you that," she laughed.

"Hard to win, I guess."

"Every girl likes to hear a man praise his mother and sisters," she remarked.

"Well, when I can't praise my mother and sister I shall not care to live."

The days and weeks went on and so did the rackets, games and studies at Avon Academy. Fred was in all of them—up to his eyes. The senior class of the girls' High School got up a raffle for his watch, the proceeds to go to the poor mother of the dead coachman. So many contributed that over five hundred dollars were raised. It was won by one of the girls who immediately sent it back to him as a present. He put it up again and three hundred dollars were raised, which also went to the poor woman.

It won him many friends in the town, and it became really unpleasant to him to go over there with the boys. Everybody wanted to shake hands with him and talk about it and the rescue.

One day he was out rowing with three of the boys, and they pulled up stream about two miles. They were about to turn back when they saw three men in a boat going across, pulling with all their might.

"Those fellows seem to be in a hurry," Joe remarked.

"Yes," assented Fred. "There are a good many people who have to hurry up sometimes."

The three men reached the other bank, leaped out and abandoned their boat, which floated with the current.

"Hello!" exclaimed Fred. "They've left the boat to take care of itself. Guess they borrowed it to get across when the owner wasn't about."

"Just the size of it, I guess," said Dick Duncan.

"Say, boys, put me across quick!" called a farmer from the opposite side of the river. He had a gun.

"What's the matter?" Fred asked.

"Them three men robbed my house an' got away when I wasn't thar ter see 'em! Gosh—put me across, quick!"

"You bet we will!" cried Fred, and the three pulled hard to where he stood.

"Jump out, Dick, and let him have your seat," said Fred, and Dick did so. The farmer leaped into the boat. He was a rough, weather-beaten old fellow—in his shirt sleeves, but there was blood in his eye.

He told the story of the robbery while they were rowing him across.

"They are three to one, sir," said Fred. "They may be too many for you."

"Gosh, they won't be so many very long if I ketch up with 'em," was the reply.

"But they may be armed, too. Such men generally have weapons," said Fred. "I'll go along with you, if you wish me to."

The old farmer looked hard at him a few moments, and said:

"You might get hurt, youngster."

"I've been hurt several times, sir, and don't mind being killed once more."

The grim old son of the soil chuckled and remarked:

"Yer kin come erlong ef yer want to. I ain't got no right to stop ye."

When he sprang ashore Fred went with him, saying to the others:

"Catch that boat and tie it up about here, so we can get over when we come back."

"Better come back, Fred," said Dick. "You might get into trouble."

"I'll chance that," he replied. "The odds are too great, and I'm going to help him," and with that he hurried on with the farmer, who said to him:

"Young man, you've got grit, you hev! What's yer name?"

"Fred Fearnot, sir. I belong at the academy."

"Oh, yer do, eh? Wall, come on. Sorry you hain't got no gun."

"I'll make 'em believe I have a revolver," said Fred. "Sometimes a bluff is as good as a shot."

"B'gosh, it won't be no bluff ef I git up with 'em."

The farmer seemed to know just which way the robbers were going, for a cow path led through a wooded part of the country to a main road. He guessed that they were making for that road. He guessed right.

They had stopped in a densely wooded spot to divide the plunder preparatory to separating and meeting somewhere else.

Fred and the farmer came upon them with a startling suddenness. Both parties were surprised.

The robbers sprang to their feet and one began firing with his revolver. The farmer tried to get to a tree, but stepped in a hole and fell. Fred sprang to his side, snatched up the double barreled shot-gun and blazed away at the one with the revolver, peppering him on chest and face with bird shot.

He keeled over backward, and Fred gave another a peppering. The third man held up both hands with:

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!"

By that time the farmer regained his feet and gave Fred two fresh shells, calling out:

"Gosh ding 'em! kill 'em!"

"Oh, no, we've got 'em!" exclaimed Fred, as he saw two of them dancing about and rubbing their perforated hides. "Get that revolver—if they move I'll finish them!" and he was then close enough to do it.

The farmer got the revolver, and recovered his property. They had his watch and several hundred dollars' worth of jewelry belonging to his daughter, besides as much in cash.

"Gosh ding yer!" he exclaimed. "I'll take yer to town an' turn yer over to the sheriff," and he held the revolver so menacingly as to give them a terror they could not shake off. Two of them were badly hurt, for the range was close and the bird shot had penetrated deep. The other one was too much terrified to offer any resistance.

They went along peacefully enough, and Fred followed, with the shot-gun as a guard. The old farmer held one by the collar. He made the mistake of holding on to one of the wounded men, instead of the one who was unhurt.

As they were going through another part of a thickly wooded section, the third man made a sudden plunge through a clump of bushes, and was out of sight in a moment.

Fred fired and dashed in after him, leaving the farmer holding on to the other two.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ESCAPE OF ONE OF THE ROBBERS—FRED MAKES ANOTHER RESCUE.

HOLDING the gun ready for instant use, Fred dashed through the bushes in hot pursuit of the fleeing robber. Once he caught a glimpse of him and fired again.

The fellow yelled, but ran like a deer. Fred kept right after him, forgetting that the gun was then empty.

But he never saw him again. The fellow got away,

and inside of ten minutes Fred was conscious of the fact. He returned to the farmer, who asked:

"Did yer kill 'im?"

"No, sir—he got away, but I guess he's pretty well peppered."

"Gosh, yes! I heerd 'im holler. Wall, we've got two on 'em."

"Have you any more shells?" Fred asked.

"Yes," and the irate old man handed out two more to him. He adjusted them and went along with the three, and two hours later they reached the city where the two prisoners were turned over to the law officers.

Fred hurried back to the academy where he told the professor what had happened.

"You did right, my boy, but ran a very great risk."

"I know I did, sir, but it looked cowardly to let the farmer go it alone."

The news didn't reach the boys till the next day, when the Avon papers had the old farmer's story complete, in which he gave the young student full credit for the capture.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "If he hadn't been thar they'd have got me dead."

Two days later the farmer drove up to the academy with a big wagon load of watermelons for the entire school. He told the teachers to turn the boys loose and let them have a feast and they did.

"Say, young man," he called to Fred, "you've got the right stuff in you—you hev. I want you ter come over an' see my gal. I'll tie the dog!"

The boys roared, Fred blushed, and Eunice nearly had a fit of hysterics.

"Jes' come any time—we'll be glad ter see you," continued the old farmer. "I like er game un, I do."

"All right, sir," laughed Fred. "I'll be over there soon—if you'll keep the dog tied."

"All right—good-day an' God bless you," and he drove away.

The professor was compelled to give the boys a holiday that afternoon. Fred selected a half dozen of the largest melons and sent them to the Lambert cottage by Pete, the porter.

"I suppose you'll go and see his gal now," said Eunice when she saw him a little later.

"Yes," he laughed. "Just to see if the dog is really tied up."

She didn't appreciate his humor in his answer. She had seen the farmer's daughter and knew that she was beautiful—that she had been educated at the girl's High School in Avon, and therefore quite free from the rusticity of her farmer father.

A week passed, and one day Fred rowed up the river, with two of the boys, to the farmer's place. His name was Andrews. He saw them coming, and gave them a hearty welcome. So did his wife, who entertained them till her daughter Mollie appeared.

She, too, gave them a welcome, and the boys were charmed.

The farmer had watermelons brought in and cut. They feasted to their heart's content, after which the daughter went to the piano and played and sang for them. To the great surprise of the two boys who accompanied him, Fred sat down at the piano and played and sang like a professional. He had a fine voice, and it seemed to be well cultivated.

Mollie Andrews was a girl of eighteen, and was captured then and there by Fred, though he appeared to be utterly unconscious of the fact.

When they were leaving, the mother and daughter invited them to call again.

"Will you keep the dog tied?" Fred asked of Mrs. Andrews.

"Yes, if you will let us know when you are coming," she laughed. "But we'll keep him on guard in the melon patch."

Fred turned to his two companions and said: "That's a hint to you fellows."

The boys laughed, and one of them blurted out:

"I guess you'd better take the hint, too, for you have had your share out of that patch, and we all know it."

"If I did," he retorted, "you fellows told me you bought them and made me pay up my share, which I always did."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Mollie Andrews, "what tricks you boys do play on each other!"

"Yes," assented Fred. "I can't tumble to all of them, you know—they are too many. They have been getting any number of fine melons lately, and told me they had to pay high for them, and I had to pony up my share. And they all came from your father's patch without being paid for. It's one on me, boys, but I'll get even with you yet."

The two boys were staggered at his cool cheek, but had to laugh with him. They knew that half the boys in the academy had raided melon patches lying within a radius of two miles of the institution, and that the farmers themselves were fully aware of it.

"Miss Andrews," said one of the two, "Fred has a glib tongue that has gotten him out of many a scrape. You have seen to-day how fond he is of watermelon, and you can bet your sweetest smile that he has done his share of melon snatching. He was on the way up the river to get the row-boat full of melons out of Thompson's patch on the other side of the river, when he joined your father in pursuit of those three robbers. He made a hit that day, for now he knows where he can come and eat his fill every day of melons, and have your assistance in the bargain."

"Good! Good!" laughed Fred, "and you spoke about my having a glib tongue! Lord, but if it was not for the pain of the thing I'd swap tongues with you. I may beat you on the strict truth, but it's the glib lie on a red tongue that saves a chap, and that you've got to the full limit. Put out your tongue and let Miss Andrews see it."

Of course, the mother and daughter were highly entertained. The former again assured them that the dog would be tied up except in the melon patch, and the boys went away in great, good humor, after thanking her for her kindly warning.

On the way down the river the three boys sang songs that were re-echoed over the hills and woods.

On the left bank of the river was a road running down into Avon. It was a fine road-bed, and on pleasant afternoons many people drove out that way. The boys watched them as they passed, and once they saw a carriage with four High School girls in it who recognized them.

"Fred! Fred!" they called, waving handkerchiefs.

He waved his cap in return, and the carriage soon passed out of sight going up the road.

"You're all right with those High School girls, Fred," said one of the boys with him.

"Yes, I hope I am. The chap who is all O. K. with the girls is never going to be hanged, let me tell you. They keep him out of trouble."

"I've always heard they were at the bottom of pretty much all the trouble," remarked the other.

"Yes—for those who are not O. K. with them," and the other two saw the point. They were laughing at his philosophy, when a wild scream was heard just below them over in the road, and the next moment a horse and buggy appeared in sight, going at a break-neck pace.

"By George, it's a runaway!" cried one of the boys.

A man was standing up in the buggy lashing the horse with brutal energy and pulling savagely on the reins at the same time. By his side sat a young woman with a babe in her arms, screaming at the top of her lungs.

"That fellow is a fool and a brute!" exclaimed Fred, as he watched the couple.

Suddenly he was seen to pull the horse square around and lash him again at the same time. The maddened animal dashed toward the river and plunged in where the water was very deep right up at the banks.

The horse instantly sank out of sight, but the buggy did not sink so quickly. But when it did the man struck out to save himself, leaving the young mother and babe to drown.

"Quick! Quick, boys!" cried Fred. "Save the mother and baby!" and he stood up in the boat, threw off cap, coat and shoes. "Pull hard! Pull!"

The boat was turned quickly toward the bank where the horse had plunged into the water.

The mother and baby disappeared from sight—but a moment or two later re-appeared, floating away with the current. One wild, piercing scream came from the woman and again she sank.

Fred sprang from the boat and swam for the spot where the current would take her. When he reached there she came up gasping, strangling, but clinging to her babe with a deathless tenacity.

He reached out and caught her—held her head and that of the babe's above the water.

"Here with the boat!" he called, and the two boys pulled for him with might and main. The woman was gasping and struggling wildly.

"Hurry up, or she'll drown me!" cried Fred, and a moment or two later the boat reached him. The mother was pulled in. She was saved.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THREATENING MOB.

FRED scrambled into the boat only after the mother and babe had been safely deposited in it.

Then he caught up the little innocent, which seemed but a year or fifteen months old, turned it on its stomach over his knee, and rolled it vigorously till it disgorged a quantity of water it had swallowed.

"There! you're all right now," he said, as he turned the child in an upright position again.

The mother did not quite lose consciousness, but did lose her head entirely. She screamed:

"Oh, my baby! Oh, my baby!" till Fred assured her the child was safe.

"We might save the horse, Fred," said one of the boys, "if we put the mother and baby ashore."

Fred looked and saw that the horse was trying to swim ashore with the buggy, both floating away with the current. He also saw the husband of the woman running along the river bank calling to the animal—trying to coax him ashore.

"Why don't you swim out to him and cut him loose from the buggy, you brutal fool!" Fred called out to him.

"I can't swim!" the man replied.

"Got a sharp knife, Phil?" Fred asked one of the boys in the boat.

"Yes," and Phil produced it.

Fred opened it to see if the blade was sharp. It had a pretty keen edge. He shut it again and put it in his mouth.

The next moment he plunged into the water and swam out to the now almost exhausted horse. The faithful animal seemed to know that he had come to his rescue. He gave an almost human cry as Fred

cut a trace. In another half minute the other trace was cut—with the britching straps—and the horse was free. The buggy went to the bottom, and the animal struck out for the bank. He landed in a clump of bushes, where his owner met him and assisted him through.

Fred said nothing to the man, but returned to the boat.

The mother and babe were both very sick from the quantity of water they had swallowed, but she said:

"You have saved our lives, sir. I—I don't know how to thank you enough. But for my baby I would not care to live," and she burst into tears.

"Calm yourself, madam, and tell us where you wish to go. We'll take you anywhere you wish," and Fred was extremely sympathetic in voice and manner as he spoke.

"Take me to Mrs. Freeman's on Payne street. She is my aunt."

"Do you know where Payne street is, Phil?" Fred asked.

"Yes—we'll have to get a carriage when we reach the bridge."

"Pull away, then."

They soon reached the bridge where they landed at the foot of a rude stairway, which they ascended to the street above.

"Run and get a carriage, Phil," said Fred. "I'll pay for it."

"My aunt will return the money," said the mother.

"That's all right, madam," Fred returned. "I hope neither you or the baby will experience any ill effects of the accident."

"Thank you, sir," was all she said, and waited for Phil to return with the carriage. They did not have to wait over five minutes as one was found at the nearest corner above the bridge.

"Now, Phil, you see the lady home," said Fred. "I am as wet as a drowned rat and you are dry. We'll go back in the boat and——"

"No, wait here till I return," suggested Phil. "I won't be gone very long."

The young mother grasped Fred's hand and said:

"I'll never forget I owe you my life and the life of my baby."

"It will always be a pleasant memory with me, madam," he replied. "But I don't know your name."

"Mrs. Evelyn Benton. I live over on Barry street. My husband's name is Maurice Benton."

Mrs. Benton then entered the carriage with Phil and was soon at the home of her aunt.

While waiting at the bridge for Phil a crowd gathered around Fred and his companion. Somehow or other the news of the accident and rescue got out on the main street of the town, and many ran to the bridge to see the boys.

Mrs. Benton was a very wealthy young lady when she married Maurice Benton. But he had spent at least half her fortune, and because she refused to let him squander the balance violent quarrels resulted, which became the talk of their neighborhood.

"The man acted as if he really wanted to see the mother and child drown," said Fred. "He swam ashore and left them to their fate. If she were a sister of mine I'd shoot him as I would a dog!"

"Better look out," said someone in the crowd. "Benton is a bad man."

"I don't care how bad he is. I can swear to his badness. He is a brute and a coward."

When Phil returned he found nearly one hundred people around Fred and his companion. Said he:

"Mrs. Benton said to me she believed her husband tried to drown her, and that is why she went to her aunt's residence instead of to her own home."

"He has been treating her brutally for months," said a man in the crowd. "He ought to be run out of town."

"He ought to be hanged," said Fred. "If I had dry clothes on I'd head a mob to lynch him. He drove into the river and then swam out. When I called to him to swim out to his horse and cut him loose he said he couldn't swim."

"Did you hear him say that?" exclaimed a man in the crowd.

"Yes—we all three did."

"Well, I know that he can swim as well as any man in Avon. Say, men, let's go after him and tell him he must leave Avon or be hanged."

The crowd yelled and started for the home of the Bentons. It gained in numbers till at least three hundred people had fallen into the party.

"Boys, I'm going to see that game played!" exclaimed Fred, leaping up from his seat in the boat and bounding up the steep steps to the top of the embankment.

He hurried on and soon overtook them. The crowd would have borne him on their shoulders, but just now they were bent on punishing a villain rather than rewarding a hero, so but few noticed him.

They met Benton leading his horse back to his home before they were half way there.

"There he is—hang him to a lamp-post!" cried indignant men, and a rush was made for him.

The angry exclamations all round him caused him to turn pale with fear.

"What ails you?" he called to a man whom he knew.

"You tried to drown your wife and child!" sung out a score of voices.

"Who says I did?" he asked.

"I do!" called out Fred, confronting him. "You turned the horse's head toward the river, and lashed him till he plunged in; then you swam out and left them to drown."

"You are an impudent liar, and I'll——"

"Oh, now—now!" exclaimed a stalwart man, confronting him. "I say you *did!* Call me a liar!" and the two confronted each other like two tigers.

"Now, men!" called out Fred, in clear, ringing tones. "I am ready to swear that he drove into the river—so are my two companions who were with me. I managed to save his wife and baby, and the boys pulled them into the boat. He ought to be hanged. But let the sheriff take him to the jail and lock him up till you hear what Mrs. Benton has to say about it. Mob law is a poor law at best, for it gives no man a chance to defend himself."

"Good! Good! That's good sense!" cried a dozen well known citizens. "Take him to the jail."

It struck the crowd as the best thing to do, and that is just what they did. Benton was lodged in jail and then Fred hurried away to escape the crowd. He was soon at the academy again.

CHAPTER XIV.

FRED AND THE LAWYER.

NATURALLY the rescue of Mrs. Benton and her child made a great sensation all over the country, and Fred Fearnot was more than ever a hero with the people, old and young.

But that did not save him from a great deal of criticism from the personal friends of Maurice Benton, who claimed that he was wrong when he publicly stated that the accident was no accident at all, but a deliberate attempt on the part of Maurice to drown his wife and child.

While Benton was in jail all his relatives in the county, and they were many, some of whom were

wealthy and influential, busied themselves to get him out and break down the charges against him. Numbers of them went to Fred to reason with him and show him how he was mistaken. Among them was a lawyer by the name of Blanton, who was an uncle of Benton by marriage. He was a shrewd, sharp man, and rated as an able lawyer. He sent a note through the mail to Fred at the academy, asking him to make an appointment for a meeting, as he had something important to say to him.

Fred saw from the letter heading that it came from a lawyer, but he never suspected that he was a relative of Benton's, so he wrote to him that in the afternoon of the following day he would call at his office, as other business would require his presence in town. That night he showed the letter to Terry Olcott, and requested him, if he had nothing else to do, to go over with him.

"All right," said Terry; "I think I know that fellow, for last year when Teddy, the janitor, got into a fight over in town, he defended him and cleared him. He's as sharp as a needle, and raked Teddy for twenty dollars to save him from a fine of five."

"That was tough on Teddy," laughed Fred.

"Yes, so it was; but he was the happiest fellow you ever saw when the judge decided in his favor."

"Well, I don't know what he wants to see me about, but I guess the Benton matter is at the bottom of it."

"Well, you'll find out when you go over," remarked Terry. "There is one thing about it. He can't lick the pair of us."

"Oh, I guess there won't be a fight."

The next day the two boys went over and found Lawyer Blanton waiting for them in his office. Fred introduced himself, and the lawyer grasped his hand in a very cordial way, and invited him into his private office.

"Any objection to my classmate being with me?" Fred asked.

"Oh, there's no need of any third party," remarked the lawyer; "your friend can keep his seat in here and wait. I only want to have a little talk with you."

So Terry sat down in the outer office, while Fred and the lawyer went into the other room, shut the door, and sat down near a desk.

"I wanted to see you about the Benton matter," remarked the lawyer, in a pleasant, insinuating way.

"Well, I don't know that I have anything to do with that, sir," remarked Fred.

"Why, my dear fellow," returned the lawyer, laying his hands patronizingly on Fred's knee, "you may think you haven't anything to do with it, but I assure you that you have a great deal; for you are the most important witness, perhaps, that will appear at the trial."

"Oh, that's another matter," replied Fred.

"Yes, but a very serious one, I assure you. I want to explain to you just how serious it is. Benton has been a pretty wild sort of a fellow, but he has a host of friends in the town, as well as all over the county, not one of whom think it at all possible that he could have meditated harm to his wife and child. His friends all say that he is a good fellow, good-hearted and one who has always been ready to lend a helping hand to any friend who stood in need of it; and they are saying a great many very hard things about you for making the charge that he deliberately attempted to drown his horse, wife and child."

"Well, I can't help that," remarked Fred. "I don't expect his friends to agree with me on that point. I've only told just what I saw, and there were three other boys in the boat who saw just what I did."

"Very true," said Blanton, "but you were a

considerable distance from him when the accident occurred. Hence your liability to be mistaken as to appearances. You must remember that it is a very serious charge, and might result in a very long term of imprisonment, if you and your friends persisted in placing that interpretation upon what you saw."

"Well, what other interpretation could we put on it?" Fred asked. "We judged him by only what we saw."

"But you were not near enough, perhaps, to be sure that you really saw what you claim you did. You see a mistake of that kind is a very serious one, and I am sure you would regret it as long as you lived, if you found out afterwards that you had unwittingly placed a man for a long term of years behind prison bars."

"Oh, yes," returned Fred, "I should regret very much indeed to place an innocent man in such a fix, but I can place no other construction upon his actions than what I have already done. It was not an accident, Mr. Blanton. He turned the horse's head deliberately to the river and lashed him till he plunged into it."

"Do you know the meaning of the word, deliberate?" the lawyer asked.

"Yes, I believe I do," answered Fred. "It is the reverse of haste and excitement."

"Exactly," assented the lawyer; "and yet you say the horse was running at full speed, and that Benton was standing up in the buggy, pulling desperately on the reins and at the same time lashing the animal to bring him into subjection."

"You're mistaken. I didn't say he was trying to bring the horse into subjection."

"Well, we'll leave that out, then. But how can you say that his action was deliberate, when everything was the reverse of that? For his wife was screaming, he was standing up tugging at the reins and the horse plunging forward at a break-neck speed. Where is the deliberation in a situation like that?" and the lawyer looked keenly at Fred as he propounded the query.

Fred was shrewd enough to perceive the lawyer's design in thus splitting hairs with him, and he said:

"The whole thing to my mind, and to that of my two friends who were in the boat with me, was that he turned the horse's head with the intention of driving it into the river."

"Now, see here, my young friend," said Blanton, "Maurice admits that he did turn the horse's head towards the river, but claims that his intention was to turn him completely around and thus stop his headlong speed, by either running him into the bushes, or else starting back towards town. Now, how can you say that such was not his intention?"

"I don't know anything about what his intentions were," returned Fred, "but I do know what he did, and I know furthermore that he could have turned the horse completely around if he had wished to do so, but when he got his head facing the river, he lashed him forward into it."

"It looked that way to you from where you sat in the boat, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"How far were you from the place where the horse plunged into the river?"

"It was probably fifty or sixty yards."

"Could you see from that distance whether or not the horse seized the bit and plunged madly forward, regardless of the tugging of the reins by Maurice?"

"I can't say that I could. I don't know whether the horse seized the bit or not. But one thing I did notice and that was, when the horse's head was turned towards the river Benton ceased to pull on the left rein that had turned him half way round, but

lashed the horse and held the reins even as though that was the direction in which he wanted him to go."

"I see you have the impression on your mind that Benton really wanted to drive into the river."

"Yes, sir; and Mrs. Benton, who was in the buggy with him, close enough to know and see what he was doing, has the same impression."

The lawyer smiled and remarked:

"I hardly think you know anything about what impression Mrs. Benton has on her mind. She is anxious to get a divorce and hence anything that will help her to obtain it she will do or say. So we will leave her impressions out of our talk, because she is interested and has something to gain by it; but that is not the case with you, as you have nothing to gain or lose one way or the other. From what I have heard about you, you are a young man of much promise, with a natural desire to do only what is right. Hence, can have no desire to do injustice to anyone. Now, we all blame Benton for his harsh treatment of his horse, and his reckless way of driving, and how you can say that when he turned the horse half way around till he faced the river, that he did not intend to turn him all the way around and pace him back towards town, is one of the things that puzzle me."

"Oh, well, Mr. Blanton," said Fred, "I can tell you something else that will puzzle you a great deal more, perhaps. If it is true that Benton intended to turn the horse all the way around and drive back to town, and that he did not intend to drown his wife and child, why did he not try to save them when they were in the water? Actions speak louder than words. We saw him leave the buggy and swim around more than twenty feet and climb out on the bank, leaving the horse, the woman and the child to save themselves or drown. After I had placed the mother and child in the boat, I saw him running along the bank, calling to the horse, trying to coax him to swim ashore as the current was taking him down the stream. I called to him, to know why he didn't swim out and cut the horse loose from the buggy, and he replied that he couldn't swim a lick. Now there are a hundred men in Avon who will swear that he is one of the best swimmers in the county. Now, how is that for a puzzle?"

"It is a puzzle," said the lawyer, "but Benton claims he saw that you could reach his wife and child in the boat sooner than he could, and as for cutting the horse loose, he hadn't any knife in his pocket, and hence he thought the only way to save him was to coax him ashore. Isn't that a solution of the puzzle?"

"It is a plausible explanation," answered Fred; "but it seems to me that if he didn't want his wife and child to drown he never would have turned away from them to save himself. He would have held onto them, even though all three drowned together."

"That," remarked the lawyer, straightening himself up in his chair, "is simply a matter of opinion. Different men do different things under similar circumstances. I would like to have you deliberate on this matter, for you may possibly see that you are doing a great injustice to a man whose hot-headed, passionate temperament has given him trouble all the days of his life."

"I don't intend to waste any time on it, sir. I am going to continue my studies at the academy, and when I have to tell my story in court I am going to tell the plain truth and nothing else, and you will find that my two companions in the boat with me will do the same thing. I never was a witness in a court in my life, but I know that all I have to do is to tell the plain truth. I don't suppose my opinion will have any weight whatever. Hence I don't intend to ad-

vance any opinion in the matter at all, but simply tell what I saw and heard."

"You have no personal feelings in the matter, have you?" the lawyer asked.

"None whatever, except that my sympathies are all with the woman."

"That's it," remarked the lawyer. "I fear you are letting your sympathies prejudice you."

"I don't think so."

"Well, you'll let me have another talk with you about it, will you not?"

"If I have the time, yes; but nothing will come it. You simply wish to convince me that I didn't see what I think I did; and you'll find it a very hard matter to convince me that it was an optical delusion."

"Well, I can assure you of this fact," remarked the lawyer, "that Benton has a great many very strong, rich and influential friends, and it will be greatly to your interest in many ways to assist in saving him from the consequences of his rash driving, rather than try to crush him."

"Oh, yes," assented Fred. "I know they are willing to do anything they can to save him; but so far as I am concerned, I am not going to try to save him or to hurt him. I am simply going to tell the truth about it."

"Well, I believe you are a brave, honest youth," said Blanton, "and you deserve a great deal of credit and commendation for your gallant rescue of Mrs. Benton and her babe, and I hope I shall have the pleasure of having another talk with you."

CHAPTER XV.

THE LITTLE DIFFICULTY AT THE CARRIAGE SHOP.

ON leaving the office of the lawyer Fred remarked to Terry:

"That fellow tried for half an hour to make me believe that I didn't see things that I thought I did."

"Did he succeed?" Terry asked.

"No, indeed; but he wanted to try it again, and I told him it was of no use."

"What was it all about?" Terry asked.

"Oh, he's Benton's lawyer, and is trying to have me say, practically, that he didn't try to drown his wife and child; but I told him that I wouldn't do it. He can ask more questions than any man I ever ran up against."

"I guess Benton's friends would pay something to get you out of the way, or to shut you up."

"He half way hinted at that," remarked Fred; "but I didn't take the hint, and don't intend to."

"That's right," said Terry. "That fellow ought to be hanged. It is true it was only an attempt to drown them, but it was no fault of his that he didn't succeed."

"That's true; and you can bet I'm not going to take any hand in trying to save him."

"But look here, Fred; when they find out they can't bring you around to their side, you'll be in danger of being knocked on the head by some of Benton's friends or relatives."

"Oh, I guess not. There are two other boys, witnesses, besides myself, and if they begin that sort of thing we'll have a regular hog-killing time."

A few days after his interview with the lawyer, Fred and Terry again went over across the bridge into the town, one with letters to mail and the other to have a draft cashed at the bank. They separated, agreeing to meet at the bridge and return to the academy together. Fred went down the street, after leaving Terry, and entered a dry goods store. There he met a couple of young ladies, members of the graduating class of the girls' High School.

"Oh, there's Fred Fearnot!" exclaimed one of the

young ladies, and both of them bowed and smiled with bewitching cordiality.

Of course, he joined them and had to answer many questions about the rescue of the mother and babe.

"It was just like you to do that," said one of the young ladies, "and we were not a bit surprised when we heard of it."

"Thank you," he returned. "I don't see how any man could have done otherwise."

"Of course not. But when men do such things they should be honored by everybody."

"I don't agree with you," he laughed. "A man should be honored for doing great deeds that duty didn't require of him; but when a man does what it is his duty to do I don't think he should be petted and made a fool of."

"Oh, my!" laughed one of the young ladies. "Nobody can make a fool of you."

"I'm not so sure of that," laughed he. "I don't know exactly how much praise I can stand before I go foolish. You girls, though, the other day, when you got me cornered, over in the academy, came within an ace of knocking me off my balance."

"Oh, we enjoyed that so much, and everyone came away wondering if you had not been warned of the visit and had that speech ready for us."

"Bless your dimples," laughed Fred. "Had I been warned, I would have skipped out the night before and hid in the woods."

"Why, do you mean to tell us that you had no time to think up that beautiful speech!"

"Beautiful speech!" he laughed. "You girls will call anything beautiful."

"Why, it was perfectly delightful!" exclaimed the other young lady, "and our principal declared it the neatest speech he ever heard; full of humor and pathos."

"Well, I owe him one, then," said Fred; "but I am satisfied he said that just to please you girls, for if he had said otherwise you would all have been angry, not on my account, but because it was a little racket of your own and you didn't wish to have it spoiled."

"Oh, you talk that way," laughed one of the girls, "just to make us keep on paying you compliments; but we are not going to do it. So there!"

"Good," he laughed; "if we could get all the other girls in town to say the same thing I'd be a very happy boy. It always seemed to me to be proper for a gentleman to compliment a lady, but when it comes to ladies complimenting the men it looks like equalizing the thing. I can't conceive of a man refusing to help a girl, or woman, or child in trouble, even at the risk of his life, and I tell you honestly, ladies, it does make me feel cheap when everybody chips in to make me believe that I have done something that no other man would have done. Why, it was fun to me to chase that carriage down the street and stop those horses; it really gave me an excuse to run after the girls."

The girls laughed heartily, and after a few minutes more of conversation they passed out of the store and left Fred to make his purchase, which he soon did, and went out on the street again. On the corner below he turned toward the river and went into a carriage-maker's shop to inquire for a boat-builder, whose son worked in there. Some repairs were needed on one of the boats belonging to the Academy Boat Club, and he had been requested by the boys to have the work done.

He saw the boat-builder's son, and learned from him where his father was then at work.

As he turned to leave the shop a man whom he had never seen before reached out, caught him by the col-

lar and pulled him back inside the shop, saying as he did so:

"Excuse me, but you are Fred Fearnot, are you?"

"Yes, that's my name," said Fred.

"Well, now, look here, I'm a friend of Maurice Benton and I——"

"Well, that doesn't speak well for you, sir. I wouldn't claim to be a friend of such a man," and Fred pulled away from him, leaving the man considerably abashed.

"See here, my boy," the man finally blurted out, "you don't want to be so fresh when a gentleman speaks to you. It might not be healthy for you."

"I am perfectly able to take care of my own health, sir. What in thunder do you suppose I care if you are a friend of Maurice Benton? I notice that all of his friends are pretty much alike; men whom I never saw before in my life, grab me by the arm or collar, yank me around and begin saying they are a friend of Maurice Benton. I've had enough of it and I don't wish to have anything to say to any friend of such a man," and with that Fred started to leave the shop, but he was again caught by the arm, whilst the other hissed in his ear:

"You want to sing low, my lad. You academy boys think you know more than men who left school before you were born. The friends of Maurice Benton are going to take care of him and they will take care of you, too, if you get too fresh."

Fred looked him coolly in the eye and asked:

"How will they take care of me?"

"Oh, you don't know a thing, do you?" sneered the man.

"Yes; I know a few things which you don't know."

"Well, there's one thing that you ought to know," said the other, "and that is that when a gentleman stops to talk with you, you ought to treat him like a gentleman."

"That's one thing I never fail to do," said Fred, "but when a man comes up to me, grabs me by the collar, and yanks me around as though I had just picked his pocket, and asks me if my name is Fearnot, I am pretty sure not to recognize him as a gentleman."

"Oh, you don't consider me as a gentleman, then?"

"I've already given you my opinion, sir," and with that Fred tried to get away from him. As he turned, the man gave him a push and a kick, that sent him flying out of the door, where he would have fallen upon his face had not Terry Olcott, who had just come up, caught him.

"Hallo, Fred!" exclaimed Terry, "what in thunder is the matter?"

Without answering the question, Fred stooped and picked up a spoke from an old wheel, which happened to be lying on the ground, right at his feet, and with it began a furious assault on the friend of Maurice Benton. The man tried to catch the spoke, and in the effort several of his fingers were broken, for Fred rained his blows like flashes of lightning, one of which landed squarely on the man's cheek.

Several workmen in the shop ran forward, caught Fred around the waist, and drew him away. Then the man picked up a piece of timber, with which he attempted to brain him, and would have done so had not Terry sprang forward and tripped him up, causing him to fall heavily to the floor.

The piece of timber fell from his hand and Terry seized it, raised it aloft, hissing out:

"Keep still now, or I'll smash the top of your head in."

"Who are you?" the man asked, not daring to rise to his feet.

"I am a friend and classmate of Fred's, and if you

strike him you strike me. You are big enough to lick either one of us, but you can't get away with the pair of us."

"Say, men," said Fred to the men who were holding him, "let go of me now, it's all over with. He struck the first blow by kicking me clear out of the door there. He said he was a friend of Maurice Benton, and I guess he is for he seems to be just that sort of a man. Come on, Terry, I'm ready to go," and the two boys walked out together, arm in arm, neither of them being hurt in the scrimmage.

"What the blazes was it about, Fred?" Terry asked.

"Oh, he tackled me about Maurice Benton, talked to me as though I was a little child that needed a spanking, and because I didn't care to listen to him, he gave me a shove and a kick as I turned away from him."

"By George, Fred, you know what I told you the other night; that some of them would try to smash you when they found they couldn't get you not to appear as a witness against him, and you see they have begun it already."

"Yes, so they have; but after this I'll be prepared for them."

"Yes," assented Terry, "and you should never go out alone, either."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of them."

"I know you are not, but I think you ought to let me know when you are going out, and give me a chance to have a little hand in the fun myself."

"All right," laughed Fred, "I'll let you know the next time I come over."

The two boys then returned to the academy, where Fred hunted up Phil and the other youth, who were in the boat with him when the rescue was made, and told them of the danger that menaced them.

"They are going to get after you, and try to force you to tell such a story when on the witness stand as to save Benton from the penalty of his crime; so you must be on the lookout and not leave the academy ground, unless one or two more of the boys are with you."

"I wish I hadn't seen the thing!" remarked Phil.

"Well, I wish it hadn't happened," said Fred; "but I'll be hanged if I'm going to let them bulldoze me into saving such a rascal as Benton!"

It turned out that the man who attacked Fred had two fingers on his right hand and one on the left broken by the old buggy spoke which Fred had wielded so vigorously, and he talked about having him arrested. It created no little excitement in the town when the truth became known, for Fred was very outspoken in his version of the trouble.

In the afternoon of the next day, Professor Lambert called Fred, Terry, Phil and the other boy into his private room and advised them to stay on the academy grounds and visit the town just as little as possible.

"For I assure you, boys," he added, "that I should regret very much indeed to see harm come to one of you. I have seen a great deal of such things in my life, and I apprehend that the friends of Benton, many of whom are rough characters with whom he has associated for years, will not hesitate to go any length to keep you from testifying against him; so I want you to promise me you will be cautious and not place yourselves in their power by going about beyond the confines of the academy grounds, unless there are enough of you together to protect yourselves. Even then, let me advise you to enter into no discussion with anybody about the case."

The boys promised him that they would follow his advice.

"Perhaps they will send notes to some of you, inviting you out to some place, in order to get hold of you. If you receive such, bring them to me and let me see what they are."

With that he dismissed them, and the boys went out in the grove, where they assembled to hear Terry describe how Fred had wielded the old buggy spoke like an Irishman with a shillalah at Donnybrook Fair.

"Howly mither of Moses!" exclaimed Teddy, the janitor, who was standing by, listening to the boys, "there are more heads broken at that same Donnybrook Fair in one day than you could crack in Avon in a week!"

"Oh, come off, Teddy!" laughed Fred. "An Irishman's head is the hardest nut to crack that is carried on two shoulders."

"Faith, and you dunno," said Teddy, shaking his head. "A real old Irish shillalah is the hardest stick in the world, and when it raps forninst a man's head he goes down like a log, bedad!"

"Say, Teddy," laughed Fred, "I want you to go with me when I go across the bridge again."

"Faith, an' I will, me bye," and his eyes danced in anticipation of a ruction.

"Have you got a shillalah, Teddy?"

"I have not; but be me sowl, I have a blackthorn stick which my father brought over from Tipperary; many's the head it cracked, and still there isn't a crack in it, bedad."

"Just the thing I want, Teddy," laughed Fred. "I'll take you over to town with me some night, just to hear you make it sing."

"Whoop!" yelled Teddy, spitting in his hands and going through the motion of twirling the blackthorn in a circle over his head, at the same time cutting the pigeon wing with the liveliest agility.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BULLET FROM THE WOODS.

A FEW days after Fred's encounter with the man at the carriage shop, he received a note from Lawyer Blanton, asking him to call at his office again. Fred took it to Professor Lambert, and told him of his previous meeting with the lawyer and the conversation that took place, adding:

"I don't wish to have anything to do with him."

"Then let me answer the note?" the professor asked.

"Thank you, sir," replied Fred. "I would be glad if you would," whereupon the professor went to his private office, and wrote a polite note to the lawyer, stating that the pupils of his academy were in his charge, and that he stood to them in the position of a parent or guardian; that he objected to any communications being made to them on matters not strictly personal, unless they first passed through his hands, and hoped that no further attempt would be made to annoy any of the students who were witnesses of the unfortunate accident to Mr. and Mrs. Benton.

The lawyer made no reply to the note, but waited an opportunity to catch Fred on the streets of the town, when he should again cross the bridge.

To make sure that he would be able to do so, he employed a man to watch the bridge and let him know when young Fearnot should come over. Fully a week passed before Fred again had occasion to go over to the town, when he and Terry went together. Each carried a stout cudgel, and the first man they met after crossing the bridge, was his carriage shop assailant, who had both of his hands bandaged. Neither of them spoke, and the boys passed on to the post-office; but the man with a bandaged hand followed them. From the post-office they went to a drug store,

and before they got out of there Lawyer Blanton came in, greeted them both pleasantly, and invited them up to his office.

"Excuse me," said Fred. "I don't care to go up into your office, Mr. Blanton. Whatever you have to say to me, you'd better say it here."

"Oh, I don't care to talk business in a public place. It isn't my way," remarked Blanton.

"I don't know that you have any business with me, Mr. Blanton. I don't wish to be rude, but I must decline to talk with you about the Benton case any more. I went to your office once, and for half an hour you labored to convince me that I didn't see what I thought I did. You can't convince me that I am blind, so there is no use in wasting any time in trying to do so."

There were about half a dozen customers in the store who heard what Fred said, and some of them laughed at the expense of the lawyer, who was just a bit nettled.

"Well, let me tell you," said he, "Mr. Robbins has engaged me to proceed against you for breaking his fingers last week, and that is what I wanted to see you about; so perhaps you might find it to your interest to call at my office before any steps are taken in the matter."

"Never mind about that, Mr. Blanton. Proceed at once," replied Fred. "I am ready to meet Mr. Robbins in court and tell the judge how I licked him after he kicked me."

Robbins was standing out on the sidewalk, in front of the drug store, and when he heard Fred say he had licked him, he rushed into the store and blurted out:

"You impudent young whelp! Do you mean to say that you licked me?"

"Why, yes," replied Fred.

"Wasn't this other boy with you, and didn't he help you?" and he pointed to Terry as he spoke.

"Do you want me to tell just how it was?" Fred asked.

"I don't care what you tell," was the surly reply; "but when you say you licked me yourself, you're a liar."

"I'd lick you again right here," returned Fred, "if you didn't have both of your hands tied up. You had the impudence to stop me and attempt to make me believe that the friends of Maurice Benton would do me up if I appeared as a witness against him; and when I refused you gave me a shove and a kick that sent me flying out of the door. I would have fallen to the ground had I not run up against my friend, who was coming in at that time. I picked up an old buggy spoke, and in less than thirty seconds had whaled you, breaking fingers on each of your hands and smashing your face. Two of the workmen in the shop ran up, caught me and pulled me away. You picked up a piece of timber and was going to strike me when I was being held by two men, and it was then my friend here tripped you up, after which the men in the shop put a stop to it. Now, if you say that is not true I will tell you to your face that you are a cowardly liar. There are four or five men in that shop who will tell the same story. I want you and all the friends of Maurice Benton, who have any desire to bulldoze or attack me, to know that I am ready for any kind of a job they try to put up on me."

Lawyer Blanton turned to Robbins and told him that was no place to bandy words with boys; that he would look after his case, and for him to keep his mouth shut. Robbins turned and left the store, after which the lawyer again said to Fred:

"You are a minor, and I dislike very much to take any legal steps against you."

"Oh, don't worry about my being a minor. I won't plead that I am an infant, but will say this, Mr. Blanton; that you can't gain anything by talking with me privately. Haul me up before the judge and spit out in court whatever you have to say."

By that time over a score of people had gathered in the drug store, in anticipation of something exciting taking place. The druggist became uneasy, and requested the lawyer to desist.

"Oh, we will get out," said Fred, and he started for the door, when an old man reached out and grasped Fred by the hand with the remark:

"That's right, my boy. Stick to the truth and stand up for your rights."

"Thank you," returned Fred, "I'll do that every time." And with that he passed out to the street, accompanied by Terry, and made his way to the bridge.

"Say, Terry," said he, as they entered the bridge, "Blanton has no idea of proceeding against us for that racket in the carriage shop."

"No, I don't believe he has. But hasn't that fellow, Robbins, got cheek, though?"

"Plenty of it; and he's just the sort of man to waylay one in the dark and sandbag him. I'll wager that he has friends who would do the same thing. If I were to come over here on a dark night, and they found it out, I'd be very lucky indeed to get back to the academy alive."

"Great Scott, Fred, you don't mean to say that they would actually waylay a fellow and kill him just to get him out of the way as a witness?"

"Yes, I do," Fred replied. "It's been done many a time, all over the country."

When Fred reached the academy that night, he found a note from Maurice Benton's wife, who was still stopping with her sister, where she had been taken on the day she was rescued from the river.

It was a note of warning, telling him that she had just been informed that certain friends of her husband had been heard to make serious threats against him, and that she considered it her duty to inform him, that he might be on his guard. She wound up by expressing her deep gratitude for the great service he had rendered her and her child, and prayed earnestly for his happiness and prosperity in life.

He answered the note, and told her that he had heard the same things himself, and that while he was in nowise disturbed, he had been advised by the professor to be cautious in his movements and avoid having trouble with anyone. He thanked her for her kind wishes, and expressed as much for her in her unfortunate situation. Late in the afternoon of the next day after he had received the note from Mrs. Benton, Fred was with the boat club down on the river. They rowed a mile up stream, and then turned to make their way back to the boat-house. As they were passing a very thick piece of woods on the left bank of the river, a rifle shot was heard, and Fred's cap was knocked from his head into the water.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed; "I wonder if it was a bullet that knocked that cap off my head?"

There were five boys in the boat, and one of them lifted the cap out of the water with his oar and passed it over to Fred. He ran his finger through a bullet hole and held it up, with the exclamation:

"Look at that, will you?"

The boys looked at it in dumfounded amazement, and Dick Duncan called out angrily:

"Let's go into the woods there and see who it is that's shooting so carelessly." And the boys turned the boat to the bank, where four of them, including Fred, sprang out and made a thorough search of the woods for a distance of a hundred yards from the

water's edge. They could find no one, nor any trace of anybody; so they returned to the boat fully convinced that somebody had shot at Fred intentionally.

"I can't believe it," said one of the boys down at the boat club, when they heard of it.

"I am sure of it," replied Fred; "for had it been an accident the shooter would have apologized, instead of running away." And again he took off his cap, ran his finger through the bullet hole and twirled it around.

The news created a good deal of excitement, over in Avon, and threats of lynching were made by many indignant citizens. Professor Lambert became extremely nervous, for it began to look as though some of his pupils would be killed before the excitement passed away.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MAN FROM ALTOONA AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.

THE next day after the shooting of Fred's cap from his head, Larry McGowan, who was the third witness, with Fred and Phil, of the attempted drowning of Mrs. Benton, disappeared from the academy, and no one knew what had become of him. Grave apprehensions for his safety were felt and expressed by all the teachers at the academy. None of the boys had heard him say anything about leaving. His roommate, however, said that a number of things belonging to Larry were missing from the room, including an extra suit of clothes. When the professor heard that, he at once suspected that Larry had been bought off by the friends of Benton and had fled to parts unknown, to remain away until after the trial. He immediately telegraphed to Larry's parents, who lived in a town more than a hundred miles away from Avon, inquiring if they knew his whereabouts. The next day he received a reply to the effect that they were not aware that he had left the academy until his inquiry reached them.

The professor gave himself no further trouble about Larry, for he was satisfied that no harm had come to the boy except what he had done to himself. He made the statement in open school to all the students, that Larry was no longer a pupil of his; that if he returned to the academy he would be sent away without a hearing.

Another week passed and nothing had been heard from Larry, nor had the friends of Benton annoyed Fred or Phil. But the two boys were extremely cautious in their movements, always going together when they went over to town, or anywhere else outside of the academy grounds.

About this time Benton's friends succeeded in giving bail for him and having him released from jail. He immediately set to work, through the influence of friends, to bring about a reconciliation with his wife. She very firmly refused to see him, or to let him see his child, saying each time she refused that he had tried to drown her; that he had repeatedly threatened to kill her, and that under no circumstances would she ever again live with him.

Her very firm stand increased the alarm of Maurice and his friends; for they saw plainly that if she talked that way on the witness stand, backed up by Fred and Phil in their testimony of the attempt to drown her, that no power could save him.

The wife of one of his friends went to her and said, that as soon as her baby was old enough to live without the care of a mother, the law would give the child to the father.

She became almost frantic with fear, and not until her lawyer told her that under no circumstances would the law take the child from its mother, unless she was

an unfit person to have charge of it, were her fears allayed.

In a small town, like Avon, news spread rapidly from mouth to mouth, and everybody talks of their neighbors' affairs; and gossips invariably embellished each story they repeated; hence, many things were said that had but little foundation of truth. One day Fred and Terry were over in the town, on the main street, when a man beckoned to Fred, saying:

"Let me see you a moment, please."

"All right," said Fred, good-naturedly; "look at me as much as you like."

The stranger laughed and remarked:

"I want to talk to you a few moments."

"Well, why don't you talk?" Fred said.

"Oh, come along!" laughed the man, running his arm through Fred's and leading him about twenty feet away from where Terry was standing.

"Now, look here," said Fred, when they stopped, "if you begin by saying that you are a friend of Maurice Benton I won't listen to a word you have to say, for I have no respect for any man who will look another in the face and boast that he has such a man for a friend."

"I don't even know Benton," the man replied.

"All right, then, go ahead."

"Well, what I wanted to see you about is this: I can put you in the way of making a thousand dollars, and if I do so I want a hundred dollars of it for myself."

"That's nine hundred dollars for me," laughed Fred. "Let's hear what it is."

"It is this," returned the man; "there is to be a fair next week at Altoona, and there are to be a number of games played in the inclosure for the purpose of drawing large crowds. The bigger crowd, you know, the more money the association takes in at the gate. They have tried to get Corbett, the champion prize-fighter, to give boxing exhibitions for three days, for a thousand dollars a day, but they failed to get him. I heard the president of the association say that he would give you a thousand dollars, for three days, if you would come there and play one game of football each day with the team that has been engaged. You know how it is," the man continued. "Your rescue of the High School girls, as well as that of Mrs. Benton and her babe has made thousands of people anxious to see you, and they think that your presence as a member of the team will draw immense crowds. I live at Altoona and have come over here to see if I couldn't get you to accept the offer, as well as make a hundred dollars for myself. Now, what do you think about it?"

"I wouldn't do it for ten thousand dollars," replied Fred.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Why, it would be placing myself on exhibition, like a monkey, or a ring-tailed tiger."

"Oh, that's just a foolish sentiment," the man laughed. "Such chances don't come to a man but once in a lifetime, and not one man in a thousand would refuse it."

"Well, I'm the one man in that thousand," said Fred. "We've got a football team at the academy, and if they'll make us a written offer of one thousand dollars to go over there and play against another team, why, that's a different thing. They would see me just the same, you know."

"Well, that's a distinction without a difference," laughed the man, "and I suppose it will be all right. If you'll drive over there with me, which we can do any day in the week, they will make the contract with you for your team."

"Well, I don't mind doing that," replied Fred.

"When can we go?"

"Any time you say."

"Well, how will to-morrow do?"

"Make it the next day," suggested Fred, "and I will see you again to-morrow."

"That will do," said the man, and he shook hands with Fred and went on down the street.

"Say, Terry," said Fred, when he joined his classmate, "they want us to play a game of football against a crack team, over at the Altoona Fair, and we can scoop a thousand dollars by going there, besides having no end of fun."

"By George, old man," exclaimed Terry, "that's a lark, isn't it?"

"You bet it is; but we'll have to pay that man one hundred dollars out of the thousand, as a sort of commission."

"Oh, that's all right. The boys would be glad to go, even if they didn't make anything."

"Yes, that's what I thought."

The two boys returned to the academy and that night, in Dick Duncan's room, they laid all their plans for the coming game, and agreed to do some pretty hard practicing to get themselves in a condition to win.

"I've got to go over with him day after to-morrow, to sign the contract with the president of the association."

"The deuce you have," exclaimed Terry.

"Yes; that's all right, isn't it?"

"I don't know whether it is or not," said Terry.

"It seems to me that if he is authorized to engage the team, he could also have been given authority to clinch the engagement by signing the contract himself. It's twenty-seven miles over to Altoona."

"Yes. It's a good road, though, and it will be a pleasant drive."

"Look here, Fred. That fellow's putting up a job on you."

"What sort of a job, Terry?"

"Hanged if I know, but I'll bet if you go with him you won't come back to Avon."

"Why not?"

"Hang it, man, can't you see through that? It's a trick of some of Benton's friends to put you out of the way."

Fred looked at Terry in silence for nearly a minute, and then a light seemed to break over him.

"By George, Terry, you may be right, and if you are I want to find it out. I'll tell you. I'll go with him day after to-morrow, which will be Saturday, you know. We are to drive over in a buggy, and the whole crowd of us will go. If we find out that it is a job, we'll have some fun with that fellow."

"Good! Good!" exclaimed Terry. "We won't do a thing to him!"

"I'll tell you what we'll do," continued Fred.

"Ten of you must go over to the stables to-morrow and hire horses and ride out of town some two or three miles, and wait till we come along in the buggy. Then you can join us with a hurrah and escort us over to Altoona. If it's all right we'll sign the contract. If it isn't all right, well, we'll have some fun with him."

The suggestion struck the boys pat, and they agreed to it unanimously, at the same time pledging each other to secrecy.

The next day Fred met the Altoona man over on Main street, and arranged to reach Avon early the next morning in a buggy, for the purpose of signing the contract to play football at the Altoona Fair. At the same time, Terry, Dick Duncan and the other members of the team quietly engaged horses from the two livery stables in the town, for a day's ride into the country.

They returned to the academy after having completed all their arrangements, and early the next morning the ten boys who were to ride horseback, slipped away, crossed the bridge, secured their horses and rode out of town, two by two, to avoid exciting comment or suspicion. About an hour later Fred joined the Altoona man, who was waiting for him with his horse and buggy.

"It's a good road," remarked the man, as Fred seated himself by his side, "and I've got a pretty good horse."

"Glad to hear it," said Fred; "for I get awfully tired riding behind a slow horse. I have a tiptop horse at home, who can make 2:25 in harness, on a good road, with the greatest ease."

"That's a good one," remarked the man.

"Yes," said Fred. "He was given me by my father, and I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for him. If they would have horse racing at the fair for non-professionals I'd send for him and run him."

They were chatting pleasantly whilst driving along the road, when they saw a number of horsemen some distance ahead of them. By and by they overtook them.

"Hello, Fred!" exclaimed Terry. "Why don't you drive faster? We've been waiting for you."

"Oh, there's no use in running the horse too hard," returned Fred. "We've got all day before us; but I'm sorry for you fellows, as some of you will be badly shaken up before we get there, for it's a pretty long ride in the saddle."

"Say," said the man, in a low tone to Fred. "Who are those boys?"

"Why, that's our Academy Football Team. They all insisted on riding over with us, just for the fun of the trip."

"Oh, thunder!" the man growled. "There was no need of the whole team going."

"No; but the boys wanted to go, and nobody had any right to say they should not."

"Oh, well, I don't want to drive over there with a gang like that."

"Why, do you object to their going?"

"Oh, I haven't any right to object; but I'm afraid it will spoil the whole business."

"Why, how can it?" Fred asked.

"Oh, I don't know. I didn't expect it, that's all."

"Well, I don't see how it can spoil anything, as we can have more fun when the whole team is along."

"I am afraid it will break up the whole thing," the man remarked, shaking his head. "I'd rather turn around and go back than to drive over with such a crowd."

"Well, tell the boys so, then," suggested Fred; "for I certainly wouldn't do it myself. They are all good fellows, and it isn't often they have a chance to get away from the academy in a body."

They were now about five miles from town. The man stopped his horse and said he guessed he wouldn't go, but would drive back to Avon and ask the president of the association for authority to sign the contract there.

"All right," said Fred, and he called out to the boys to stop.

"What's the matter?" Terry asked.

"Our friend here says he doesn't care to drive over with the whole team, that he would rather go back to Avon and write to Altoona for authority to sign the contract there."

"Oh, thunder!" growled Terry. "That will spoil our day's fun. Let's go on anyhow."

"Yes," chorused the whole crowd. "Let's go on and sign the contract there. What difference does it make?"

"It will spoil the whole business," said the man in the buggy.

"It will certainly spoil our day's fun," remarked Terry, "so I move that we go ahead."

"Well, go ahead if you want to," retorted the man. "I'll return to Avon."

"No, you won't," replied Terry. "You'll go on with us or we'll know the reason why."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Why, we mean to go on to Altoona and see about that contract for playing football."

"Well, who's preventing you from going?"

"Well, you are trying to prevent it," answered Terry, "but you can't do it; and what's more, you are going with us."

"I guess not," was the reply, and with that he attempted to turn the horse's head back toward Avon.

The boys instantly surrounded him, stopped his horse, dismounted and ordered him to get out of the buggy. He protested.

"It's no use," laughed Fred; "this is a job put up on me by the friends of Maurice Benton. We are right onto you with both feet, and now we are going to have some fun with you."

The man turned white as a sheet, and protested that he had nothing to do with Benton or his friends.

"Then prove it," said Fred, "by driving over to Altoona with us."

He made no reply, whereupon Fred remarked:

"There is only one way you can save yourself, sir, from being tarred and feathered and carried back to Avon astride of a rail, and that is to make a written statement of this little game and go back with us to Avon and swear to it before a notary public."

"I won't do it!" blurted the man.

"All right; we'll have a football game right here, and you'll be the ball," and there, in the road, the boys went for him, kicked him, cuffed him, pushed him, stood him on his head, rolled him in the dirt, stripped his clothes off of him, and left him lying half dead by the roadside, after which they took his clothes with them back to Avon, where they arrived about noon and returned to the academy.

They never heard of him again, and that was the last attempt made by the friends of Benton to get the witnesses against him out of the way.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

TIME passed, and one night a few weeks later Fred went over to Avon on leave, to pay a visit to a family to whom he had become very much attached, and on his way back at a late hour, met two men in front of the bank. One wore a big bushy beard, who, as Fred passed them remarked to his companion, in a low tone:

"That's the boy with the shot-gun. I've got it in for him deep."

Fred's hearing was very acute, and he caught every word of the remark.

It struck him as very strange, and he kept thinking about it as he went on toward the bridge.

"They must be friends of the men Mr. Andrews and I caught a month ago," he thought to himself, "else why should that fellow have a grudge against me? Hang it, he may be the fellow who got away from us! But he has a bushy beard, when the other one had only a mustache. Blest if I don't go back and have another look at them. They were standing in front of the Avon Bank," and he turned and retraced his steps.

But the two men were gone. He walked down the length of the block without seeing them.

"They're gone," he muttered. "I'd give a dollar

or two to find out who they were," and again he wended his way toward the bridge, which he crossed and continued on his way.

When about one hundred yards beyond the bridge he heard a horse's whinny in the woods by the roadside, and came to a sudden halt.

"What's a horse doing in there, I wonder?" he muttered, and a minute or two later he entered the woods.

To his amazement he found a horse there—hitched to a buggy.

"Oh, ho! This means something. I'll wait here and see about it. It may be none of my business, but I've got a good deal of curiosity to know whose business it is."

He stood aside in the bushes and waited. The hour was already late, but he had leave of absence from Teacher Brown, so he could stay as long as he pleased.

Time passed—over an hour—and then it was midnight. But he had perseverance—a whole lot of it.

Suddenly he heard footsteps, and soon two men came along the road from the town—having come over the bridge.

They went to the buggy and led the horse out into the road. It was not so dark but what he could see them when out from the gloomy shadow of the trees.

They were the two men whom he had seen standing in front of the Avon Bank—and he noticed the man with the bushy beard, who said to his companion:

"We can reach Dupont by sunrise and catch the train without driving very hard."

"Yes," said the other. "We can't drive very fast in the dark without risking a smash-up of some kind," and with that they drove away.

"Well, here's a mystery," said Fred to himself. "They are going right by the academy on their way to Dupont. Guess they won't stop to settle with me or Mr. Andrews, for he lives on the other side of the river."

He went on back to the academy where, with a key loaned him by Brown, he entered and retired to his room without anyone knowing when he returned.

The next morning the town of Avon was startled by the report that the bank had been looted the night before, and a very large sum of money, bonds and other valuables were gone.

Fred hurried to Professor Lambert, and told him what he had seen and heard the night before. The professor told him to hasten to tell the authorities.

"Yes, sir; and I'll go with them, too!" he said. "I don't know when I'll be back. That fellow threatens that he has it in for me deep, and I'll follow him up to the end to give him a chance. If I miss my graduation, will you give me a chance later on?"

"Yes, my boy."

"Then good-by, sir," and he shook hands with the professor and hurried over to Avon.

There he sought the president of the bank and told him his story. That official was staggered. He ^{had} ^{to} ^{have} for the police, and in less than a half hour four ^{were} ^{to} ^{be} ready to mount and go in pursuit. ^{For} ^{nada,}

As he said he could identify the two men a horse was furnished Fred that he might accompany them. In a little while they dashed over the bridge on the way to Dupont twenty miles away.

Thus Fred left the academy at Avon before completing his course there, and went in pursuit of exciting adventures without the knowledge of his parents.

The next number (2) of WORK AND WIN will contain the great story, "FRED FEARNOT, DETECTIVE: OR, BALKING A DESPERATE GAME," by the author of "Fred Fearnot."

LETTERS FROM P. ADOLPHUS SWEETCAKE

The Dude.

Editor of "WORK AND WIN."

FWIEND of mind, Chollie Devereaux—maybe you know Chollie—showed me a copy of your papah the mah day. I wead several lines of it, and I found it al interwesting. The stowy I wead was, I forget the name, but there was a girl in it, and a wegulah an and a burning gwave-yard. I have saved the papah, though, and will wead the rest by degwees. I dare not wead much at one time, for the doctah says that my constitution is not stwong enough for violent exercise.

Said Chollie to me :

"Old chappie?"

"Well, old fellah?" I weplied.

"How do you like that papah?"

"Just the thing, I think."

"I say, old chappie?"

"Well, old fellah?"

"Why don't you wite for it."

I looked at Chollie to see if he looked cwazy or out of his head.

To confess, I had a sort of ideah that he was dwunk.

That is one of Chollie's faults.

He dwinks too much altogether.

Why, he is perfectly weckless when he gets dwinking. I have seen him actually swallow three flats of beer, besides several schooners of sugar and watah.

"What do you mean?" I exclaimed; "the ideah of my witing. You know vevy well, Chollie, that when I wote my name upon the wegister of the hotel, I had the cwamp for two hours."

"Twy," said Chollie; "your expewiences would pwove weal interesting to the weaders of the papah; and say, old chappie——"

"Well, old fellah?"

"Let me give you a pwivate tip."

"About what?"

"If your lettahs suit, he will pay you for them."

"Who?"

"The publishah. You know Martie Macy?"

"Yaas."

"He wote a poem for the papah, and he weally got ollah. He acted weal munificent ovah it. He took us fellahs down to a saloon and tweated us to and aftahwards we went and got lemonade all d. Then Martie had seventy-six cents left, and he went home and paid his landlady two weeks

Chollie's words made me eager to twy.

I am working, you know, in a dwy-goods store, and I don't weceive a fortune.

In confidence, I only get two dollahs and a half a week, but the head of the firm has promised me that if I work weal hard, and give a good

end of the year he will give me two-seventy-five. Then I think I will move ovah to the West Side. Gwand stweet, where I live now, is vevy disagwee-able, especially as we have to sleep five in a room, and there is a most atwocious odor awaising from the stable in the rear.

And if I could add to my income by becoming an author (of course it is a beastly low profession, but I must have money to live on), it would be vevy pleasant to me.

It would save me a good many little economies, like, for instance, washing my shirt out in the wash-bowl. You know I have only one shirt, and I have to cleanse it in the wash-bowl, and dwy it ovah a kerosene lamp. Then I heat my shoe-horn and iron it.

It don't make much difference about the supeweority of the ironing, because none of the garment is exposed to public view. My scarf covahs the bosom, and I wear celluloid collahs and cuffs.

Therefore I considered Chollie's ideah a good one.

But says I :

"Old fellah?"

"Well, old chappie," answered he.

"Why don't you wite the lettahs yourself?"

Chollie looked at me wepwoachfully.

"Gwacious goodness, Dolphie," said he, "do you think that I would work, old chappie? This is too deuced bad!"

I apologized.

Unintentionally I had lacerated Chollie's feelings in a vevy sensitive pawt.

Chollie is well fixed.

He has an annuity of twelve dollahs per week—just think of it—and he is like the twaditional lily of the valley, "he toils not, neither does he spin," yet Chollie is always dwessed up to the nines.

When I wead his necktie bill for one month, it staggered me. Would you believe it, it actually came no neah four shillings! Just think of it!"

"Chollie, old fellah," I remarked, "you know weal well that I was not thinking at all when I spoke. And Chollie?"

"Well, Dolphie?"

"You are not mad?"

"Not at all."

"Then, old fellah?"

"Well, old chappie?"

"Do you twuly think that I might make an extwa stake witing for WORK AND WIN?"

Chollie looked at me wepwoachfully again.

"Dolphie!" uttered he.

"Well, Chollie?"

"Haven't I always stood for you?"

"Yaas."

"Even when you bought five cents' worth of peanuts at the cornah yesterday, and when the howwid old hag who wun the business had put them in your pocket, the rear pocket of your pants, and you wevealed the fact that you only had four pennies and she threatened to call a policeman, what did I do? Did not I come to your wescue? Did I not

waise my umbwella and cwyl, 'begone, base woman, or I will cwush you with a blow!' And did not she consent aftahwards, influenced by my bwave stand, to take ten of the peanuts back and call the twansaction square?"

"I own it, Chollie," said I.

"Then why do you ask me if I weally think that you could wite for the papah? I know that you can wemembah the old motto."

"What one?"

"About Wobert—Wobert——"

"Wobert who?"

"Wobert—Wobert—Not Wobert the Devil or Wobert Ingersoll, but Wobert—I've got it now."

"What, old fellah?"

"Wobert Bwuce, old chappie. He was the deliverer of—of—what's the name? You know. Of that pawt of England that ain't Wales or Ireland."

"Scotland," said I.

"Wight," said he. "Weally, Dolphie, I would give a good deal for your education. Well, this Wobert Bwuce saw a spidah twying to climb up a wall, and it fell down ninety times, I think, but 'at last it succeeded in getting up the wall, which encowaged Wobert to twy to get out of jail and capture Scotland. The motto that he founded upon the oc-cuwvence was, 'Twy, twy again, even if at first you get left.'"

Chollie's words stwuck me as having a weal wing of twuth in them.

"Old fellah?" remarked I.

"Well, old chappie?" wesponded he.

"Do you know what I think?"

"What?"

"That you are wight."

Chollie stwoked his mustache.

Chollie has a splendid mustache.

All of us are envious of it, for you can see full hairs—five on a side. The only fault of it is pched pwobably it will turn out wed, for Chollie had l re upper lip examined with a microscope, and the exa but inner said that he feared that the hairs would be c'busi-son colah.

If it does I twemble for Chollie.

I am afwaid that he will go off and commit suicide some way. I think that he thought of it to-day, for I caught him smoking a cigar, a strong cigar at that!

So, deah Editor, I have concluded to address this letter to you, asking if you desire a weportah amongst the "Dudes" and "Slims," as we are called by the wough, envious masses,

Most twuly yours,
P. ADOLPHUS SWEETCAKE.

NOTE.—We have decided to take Mr. P. Adolph Sweetcake on trial. His letters will appear wee At present we are giving him sixty cents per let but will raise the prize to seventy, if he improves with time.

Editor WORK AND WIN.

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